Rudolf Steiner Enters My Life

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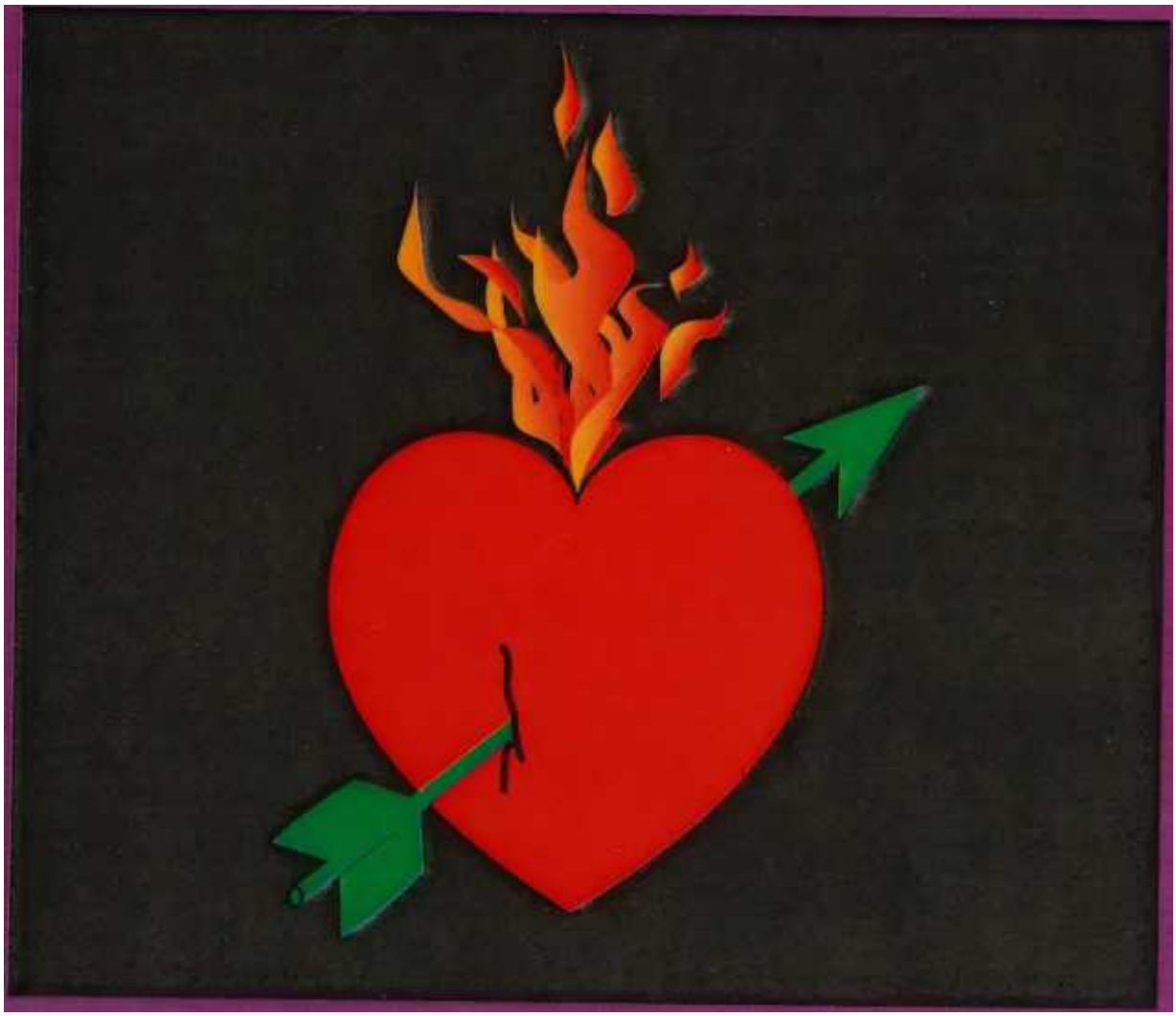

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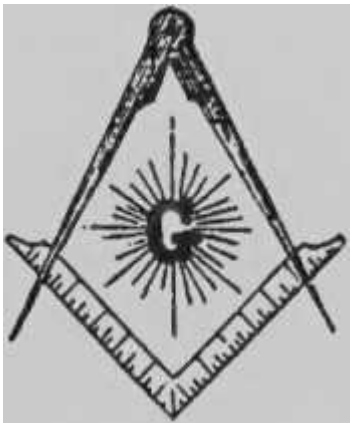

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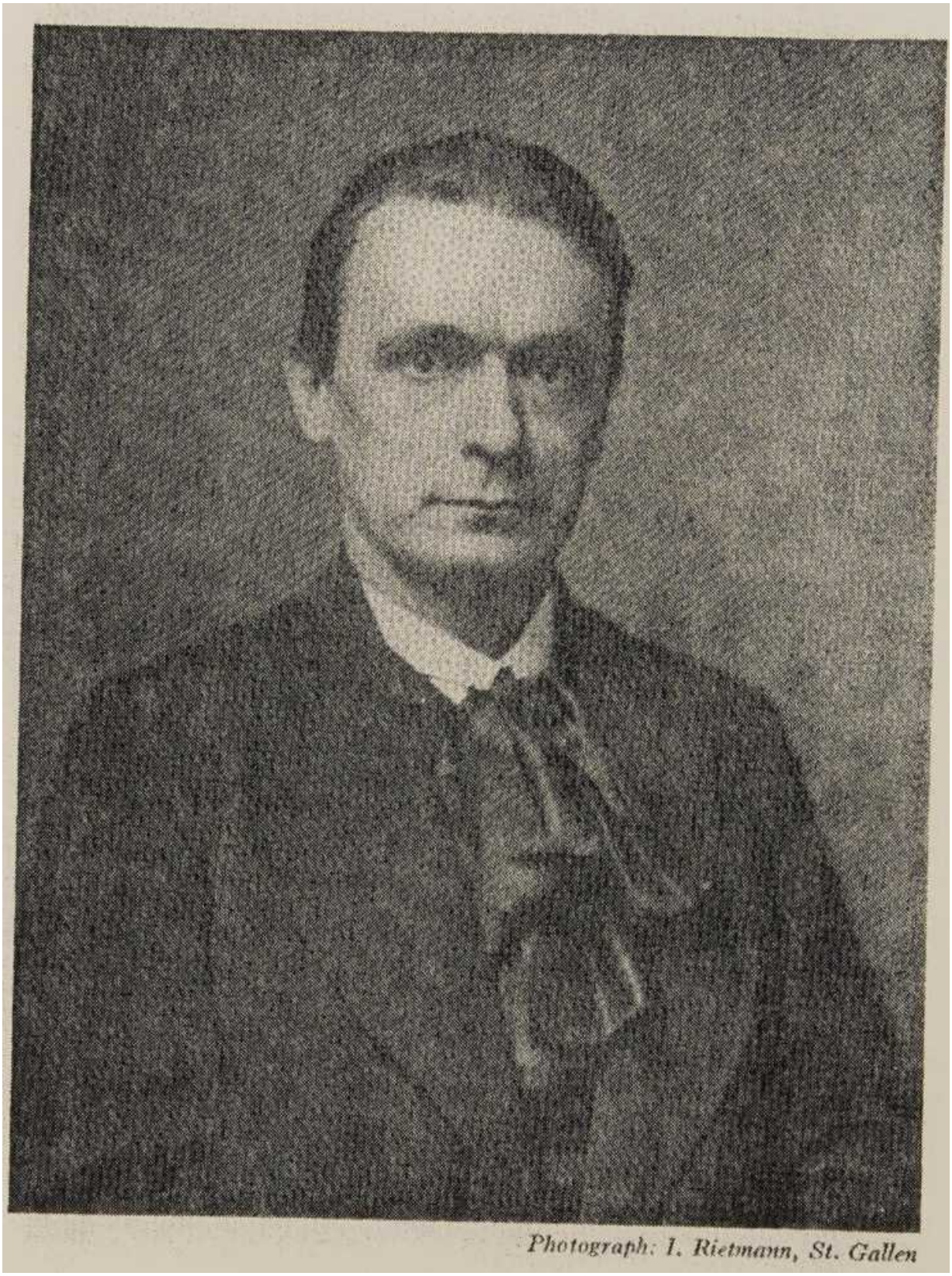

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Rudolf Steinfr ï86i—1925

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE

DR. FRIEDRICH RITTELMEYER

Translated from the German by D. S. OSMOND

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NOTE BY TRANSLATOR

ON February 27th, 1861, Rudolf Steiner was born at Kraljevic, in Lower Austria, where his father was stationmaster. In the early 'nineties he was appointed to the “Goethe-Archiv” at Weimar, having already made a name for himself by several valuable philosophical works. At Weimar he edited the whole of Goethe’s scientific works and his introductions and comments on the texts in the different volumes won great appreciation and admiration from the world of literature and philosophy. But by deepening and developing Goethe’s ideas on science, Rudolf Steiner was able to create an independent scientific system of occult knowledge to which he finally gave the name Anthroposophy. It was in connection with Anthroposophy that he became well known in his later years, not only in Middle Europe, but also in England. Between the years 1921 and 1924 he visited this country several times, giving public lectures in Oxford and London, and at Summer

Schools in Ilkley, Fen-maenmawr and Torquay. Nearly all his books and a great many of his lectures have been translated into English. But it was a very different audience which listened to him in this later period of bis development. Very few of those who had been his friends and admirers during the Weimar period followed him into Anthroposophy. Was this most gifted scientist and philosopher on the wrong track? Or was his progress too rapid and too unusual to be followed by lesser minds? An answer to these questions may be found in the pages of this book. The author, Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, tells us of his experiences with Rudolf Steiner over a period of many years in the form of a personal narrative, speaking of his ten years of apprehension, critical investigation and cautious scrutiny of the new body of thought, and his final conviction of the unparalleled greatness of Rudolf Steiner's spirit.

Nobody could have been better fitted than Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeycr to investigate and prove the value of Rudolf Steiner's work. A fully qualified theologian and a clever psychologist, he had all the methods of critical investigation at his command. Well known as one of the most progressive and courageous leaders of modern Christian thought, and with his friend Christian Geyer universally recognised as "Germany's best preacher," he bad an open but at the same time critical eye for all new spiritual movements of his epoch. His various posts brought him into contact with outstanding men of all classes and nations, and developed an unerring judgment of human nature. For all that, however, he might not have recognised Rudolf Steiner—as others did not—if destiny had not intervened and brought about the meeting which was to lead on to the most crucial experiences of his life and ultimately made him one of the truest and ablest interpreters of Rudolf Steiner's work.

The grateful thanks of the translator are due to Dr. A. Heidenreich for his invaluable help in the preparation of the manuscript.

D.S.O.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

When the First Edition of this remarkable account of Rudolf Steiner's personality appeared in 1929, someone remarked that it would not have much chance of a sale in England, as from an English point of view it was written "by a stranger about a stranger". The situation has changed considerably since then. Rudolf Steiner's name and work, and activities connected with his teaching, have become fairly widely known in this country. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, too, though in a much smaller degree, has gained a place in the religious literature of England through translations of several of his principal works.

This Second Edition, in which only a few minor alterations have been made, should therefore find an even wider circle of readers than the First Edition, contrary to expectations, has found. Steiner undoubtedly belongs to those few human beings whose influence and importance grow as time goes on. As our present civilization more and more disintegrates, it is very likely that an increasing number of men will find in his work the powerful seeds of a better future. They will then like to have a picture of his personality drawn by one who knew him well, and who was himself great enough to gauge the exceptional rank of the other. A Second Edition of this volume seems therefore amply justified.

January, 1940. A. HEIDENREICH.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE

THIS book would find its way to those who are interested in the question: What was Rudolf Steiner like as a personality?—and who would rather listen to an eye-witness than to strangers and opponents. They will be told how a man grounded in modern Protestant theology came to Rudolf Steiner, and what he experienced in connection with him. The account has its limitations: intimate and personal affairs do not belong to the realm of publicity, although it is often precisely these experiences which have brought the strongest conviction; things occult and spiritual cannot always be broadcast, albeit they may have given rise to the deepest experiences of all. Within these limitations, however, I propose to say what I feel it is in

any way possible to say, undeterred by the misuse that is wont to be made of such narratives by opponents, who— sad to relate—are not confined to the ranks of Catholicism. As a matter of fact, a particularly vicious attack on Rudolf Steiner as a personality, in a leading periodical, has given the final impetus to the writing of this book.

I did not keep written accounts of my meetings with Rudolf Steiner. There seemed to be something unnatural about going to every conversation with the conscious purpose of afterwards writing it all down. I felt that this would endanger the freedom and verve of the direct intercourse and final intimacy. And so I do not repeat Dr. Steiner's words literally, as they were actually spoken, although inverted commas have been used for the sake of distinction. I give them as they live in my memory and take responsibility for their substance and meaning, but not for their literal exactitude.

From first to last I did not think of myself so much as an isolated personality in the conversations I was able to have with Rudolf Steiner. I said to myself: Only a very few can have the opportunity of coming into close contact with such a man. But those few have an obligation to all mankind, both in what they ask and investigate, and in the answers and information vouchsafed to them. It seemed that Rudolf Steiner himself understood and approved of my attitude, and he told me a great deal. He knew that I should not regard it as my own possession but give it again to mankind at the right time.

That time may now have come. Those who read the newspapers and periodicals to-day cannot help being horror-struck when they see that humanity has everywhere reached dilemmas where only Anthroposophy can help. Hardly a day passes without bringing new examples of this. But humanity knows nothing of the help that is available, or else does not wish to know it. The fact that this is so is largely due to the poisonous cloud of calumny that has been spread over the founder of Anthroposophy, with the object of making him not only invisible, but a figure of scorn. In spite of brilliant scientific discoveries, the growing dearth in all domains and the shortcomings of other sources of help must eventually bring men to Anthroposophy.

That this niay come to pass for the well-being of humanity at a somewhat less distant future, is the aim this book hopes to further. There can be no question of offering actual proofs of Anthroposophy—that would have to be done in quite a different way—but merely of speaking a word for its Founder. And this may seem all the more necessary nowadays, when there are increasing indications that it is becoming customary to resort to the method of ancient brigandage :— Kill a man and then go and loot him! Men have done their best to putRudolf Steiner to a spiritual death. And now they see fit to rob him of his spiritual treasures and parade them as their own.

If this book is to be what it desires to be—the story of how a man came from present-day Christianity to Rudolf Steiner

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE ii and through him to Anthroposophy and The Christian Community*—it is permissible to introduce even subordinate features and conversations which were not full of weighty substance, when they are part of the whole picture. The paths to Rudolf Steiner are manifold. And associated with this book is a hope that men from quite different spheres of life—doctors, educationists, artists, politicians—will also tell how they came to Rudolf Steiner. For not until the story is enlarged and supplemented in this sense can a true and complete picture of him come into being.

•The new religious Movement based on Anthroposophy. The Movement has congregations in all the larger towns of Germany, and in various towns in Switzerland, Holland, Czecho-Slovakia, Norway, and England.

THERE are moments in a man’s life when he seems to be aware of the delicate chiming of a bell. A new hour of destiny is dawning. It is as though the gaze of higher spirits was being directed upon him. Much depends—both for himself and for others—upon the action he now takes.

One of these moments came at the end of the year 1910, when I received a request from a large town in the North of Germany to give a public lecture on the religious strivings of the present time. I was deeply interested in the current urge towards a revival of religion, and now, when it was a question of giving a general survey, it occurred to me that a pronounced lack of

sympathy had always made me ignore a certain phenomenon of the times, namely "Theosophy."* If I undertook the lecture, it was my duty to go into the fundamental principles of this current of thought as well. Up to that time I knew very little about it. A decided antagonism stood in the way. It seemed to me a mass of unfounded statements, an inquisitive and ill-considered prying into the spiritual background of the universe, wearisome and soulless, a veritable jumble of Oriental thought and Christianity, falling short of all serious spiritual demands, intolerable to all true religious feeling, audacious, cold, sensation-mongering.

But after all—it was only right to see what was valuable in the eyes of these people. The sacrifices they made were worthy of respect and they found unmistakable satisfaction in life. Anyone who feels that attention at least is due to the religious life of his contemporaries, ought at some time or other to probe more deeply into this domain.

So I wrote to the representatives of the different theosophical institutions in Nuremberg, where I was then

•Ä« Translator's Note at end of book*

 working as a Protestant Minister, asking if I might visit them to make inquiries about their Movement and borrow their literature. Soon afterwards, my future friend Michael Bauer was sitting in my study. The impression he made upon me was unexpected and quite unusual. I suddenly saw before me a man of rare spirituality, one who was seeking for the very highest ideals in life. Coming from a simple peasant family in Upper Franconia, by profession "just a Secondary School Teacher," Michael Bauer had scoured every domain of modern spiritual thought in his quest for truth. In his earlier years a free thinker in the school of Ernst Haeckel, he had applied himself to natural science, above all to physics and chemistry. An insistent urge for higher self-development had led him to the writings of the Swabian occultist Kerning, and he had resolutely devoted himself to the practice of his "exercises." Michael Bauer had traversed many domains of German philosophy, always on the track of ultimate principles. Hegel, of whom he

had fundamental knowledge, had become his favourite philosopher. He had tried to master foreign languages, not only French and English, but also Latin, Greek and even Sanscrit, in order to drink at original sources. At that time he had just reached the end of his fortieth year. This tall, thin figure, with the dark beard and long, strikingly spiritual face, might have been taken for that of an Indian “Master" wandering through the cities of Europe. I have heard of people to whom the very sight of Michael Bauer moving among the flowers in his garden had been an outstanding event in their lives. But it was his eyes that impressed one most strongly. There was no suggestion here of any Indian element; the light of Christ was shining out into the world through those eyes. With the single exception of Rudolf Steiner himself I have never seen such golden light in the depths of human eyes. A wisdom-filled kindliness radiated from him and filled his whole surroundings. He was always ready to appreciate every human being, be he the most immature, and never ready to let himself be overpowered by any man, be he the

 greatest. Even to Rudolf Steiner his attitude was one of admirable freedom. A child’s capacity for reverence had lived on unabated into the mature years of a man who had been brought to the brink of the grave by heavy strokes of fate and ruthless overstrain. But this pure power of reverence, the like of which I had never seen before in a grown man, was combined, in his case, with a firm self-assurance and sense of self. This union of reverence and freedom in a human being gave rise to an atmosphere of nobility which could be felt whenever one talked to him. A particularly kind Providence had led precisely this man across my path when I was beginning to ask about Theosophy. If he had not been there, my lot would probably have been that of hundreds of others of my generation. I might have gone to hear Rudolf Steiner lecture in order to “know something of him.” I should have read one or another of his books in a critical spirit in order to “form an opinion.” But I should have passed by the greatest man of my time without an inkling of who had come my way.

Other things, too, of course, had been a preparation for this hour of destiny. A short time previously I had lectured at the Convention of the Freunde der Christlichen Welt in South Germany. This was a body of people who fully

recognised the results of modern scientific research, and were fighting for freedom and truth in the religious life of the future. I felt myself more spiritually akin to them than to any other body in the world of theology at that time. But the title I chose for my lecture—What does modern Theology lack?—is an indication of what I felt my own position to be. This was the only lecture I gave to a large gathering of theologians. Nor indeed was I ever asked for another. In the discussion after the lecture, Ernst Troeltsch—who later on became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin—got up to speak. His remarks about the lecture were not altogether unfriendly, but he said: "Again we have been listening to someone who is trying to get outside his skin; and that is something man simply cannot do." This angered me, and in the final speech I retorted: "You are one

 of those who paralyse young theologians with your eternal doctrine of relativity; and when you say man cannot get outside his skin, my answer to you is that he ought to. I, for one, am striving in this direction, and I shall succeed!" Troeltsch gave a forbearing smile, and others with him. But later on it seemed to me as if good spirits had heard my wish, and from then onwards guided my steps to a path along which man actually learns to "get outside his skin."

One more detail may be mentioned here because it was not without significance. For years I had been saying to myself: If I wish one thing of destiny it is that I may not pass by the greatest spiritual phenomenon of my day. Least of all would I share the lot of Frederick the Great, who was a contemporary of Goethe but did not recognise him. What are these wishes when they arise in a man? Are they premonitions of what is to come? Are they dim remembrances of a charge whispered by our angel when we were relinquished to the earthly world? But precisely this feeling of mine was misinterpreted by well-meaning friends. "Why will you always point to another? What about you yourself!" To many of the outstanding men among our contemporaries this wish to be "somebody" has been the obstacle which prevented them from even approaching Rudolf Steiner. The ultimate will-to-truth—I say it with all emphasis—was not in them. They also lacked the assured sense of self which is never lost if it finds its right place in the universe. And they lacked that realisation of responsibility

which, without the fever of ambition, knows that the freely-given help of all good and active men is due to one who is the greater worker of them all.

----So there was Michael Bauer, sitting in front of me. In a tone of smiling superiority I tried to introduce the conversation with the question: “And so you believe in reincarnation?” But I saw immediately that I would have to drop this tone once and for always. A shadow passed over that open, spiritual face. Not unkindly, but in a tone indicating an unmistakable defensive, came the answer: “I

cannot do otherwise.” And then, in this and subsequent conversations, he proceeded to tell me how his innermost strivings had always been directed to Christ. The fact that he could reverently bear Christ within him as the veritable Son of God, while maintaining a firm, impartial position in the modern world of science and research—this he owed to “Theosophy.” Even if everything else that it had given him were taken away, this supreme realisation could never be lost. The best evidence of the truth of his words was the man himself. Here was a Christhood different even from that of men like Friedrich von Bodelschwingh or Christoph Blumhardt, with whom I had also sat and talked. In such men Christ was living in the depths of the heart and in the feeling of the reality of a higher world. In this man, Christ was living in the light of a pristine spirit, in the holy-of-holies of a free Ego. And this was something higher. Blumhardt especially was a splendid product of Protestant belief—a man worthy of all admiration. Michael Bauer was an unlooked-for herald of a Christianity to come. Christhood as the apotheosis of a full and complete alertness to the world, of an all-pervading clarity of spirit and of the highest Ego freedom—that was what I glimpsed at the time.

Once later on, during a meeting in Berlin, the words were flung at me: “We have Christ! What do we want with Rudolf Steiner?” My retort to that was that I should be surprised if there were not some among us who would have to admit that without Rudolf Steiner they would not have found Christ. And four or five men in the gathering spoke warmly in the same sense.

Michael Bauer also told me of his efforts in the domain of spiritual healing. After some successful cases he had abandoned this way of working because people were apt to become too dependent upon him, and the new evil

seemed to him worse than the first. These experiences were described in an atmosphere of the greatest purity and humility, and when he spoke of human frailties his eyes shone with the light of genuine, human sympathy. He also let me hear of

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 17 his experiences with the dead. The healthy atmosphere and calm, mental alertness which pervaded his account of these experiences, made me see this domain in a new light, and I could not adopt the attitude of mere denial. But above all, it was significant that Michael Bauer was the man through whom I first got a picture of Rudolf Steiner. He told me how, during a train-journey by night, he had spoken to Dr. Steiner of his experiences in connection with Kerning's "exercises," how he immediately found himself in the presence of a superior knowledge, and how, as the result of Dr. Steiner's advice, he had quickly escaped from undesirable byways and been guided to a path of sure and healthy spiritual development. And so we spoke of worlds which are to-day still foreign to the majority of human beings. The intervening period, of course, has brought very much clearer evidence that these worlds do indeed enter into the life of mankind. There was absolutely no need for me there and then to adopt any "attitude" to what was being said or to "form a judgment" based on knowledge hitherto acquired. I simply let myself be told many things.

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All at once I had a pile of "theosophical" literature in my house, including the books issued by Catherine Tingley's American organisation. They had been sent by the representative of this branch of Theosophy who also happened to be living and working in Nuremberg. But after a cursory glance I laid them aside without misgiving. I should have felt myself put to scorn by Hegel and Fichte if I had been able to take such childishness seriously. Knowledge of the world was being neatly served out in medieval vessels, and people were basking in pleasurable emotions. Nor had I any misgivings about Annie Besant and her colleagues. The spirit, as presented by them, was a mixture of ancient tradition and subjective emotionalism. All kinds of unhealthy elements, yearnings and a greed for happiness rose from these writings like a cloud.

The only one who interested me was Rudolf Steiner.

2

But—surely he must have come from some other planet! How can a man say such amazing things, one after the other, unendingly new, and make such astounding statements with the air of a prosaic recorder? At that time I had no idea that Rudolf Steiner had already made a name for himself by philosophical works of historic and fundamental value before he came forward as a spiritual investigator, nor had I the slightest inkling that he was thoroughly at home in the various branches of scientific research. I simply felt: Here is a man who must be taken seriously. The quality of what he said was such that one no longer felt ashamed at the thought of Hegel and Fichte.

From the very beginning I had been allowed access to the private lecture-courses—the so-called "Cycles." So I set to work chiefly upon those points which the theologian in me felt bound to challenge. I covered many a sheet of paper with notes of passages where I considered Rudolf Steiner's explanation of the Bible impossible. I was utterly perplexed about these "spiritual investigations" and tried to find a point where I could have said definitely: "Here is a flagrant mistake which casts suspicion on all the rest ! " But has any theologian found a mistake of this kind? I at any rate found none. Certainly, a great deal was unintelligible to me and seemed in the highest degree improbable. The feeling of alienation—not unmixed with apprehension— which many things aroused in me, could hardly have been greater. But when I did not give way to this impression, and went on thinking impartially, new possibilities emerged. At all events the speaker's audience and the imperfections of a shorthand report must be taken into account. But after all, that was simply a matter of ordinary fair play. And so I usually finished by saying to myself: "Oh well, he may be right!" And side by side with the few bafilingly obscure passages, there was such a wealth of amazing illumination that one grew cautious and humble —more and more eager for knowledge. As a theologian, what interested me above all was the unprecedented assurance with which the Bible was expounded, and in an entirely new spirit. There was

 only one alternative: Either this man has no inkling of what we theologians think of the Bible, or he has something absolutely new to give.— Later on I often went to Rudolf Steiner with a list of debatable interpretations of biblical passages in my pocket, but when I was talking to him other things seemed of far greater importance. The list remained in my pocket, unessential as compared with what I was able to ask and experience. Now and again I convinced myself by means of a brief question that there were significant backgrounds to these interpretations of the Bible. The spirit of Rudolf Steiner had said to me: "Just think of all that is trying to speak to you! Try for once to enter this world with good-will! When you understand more of the whole, many things that now weigh heavily will clear up. And if they do not—Is that after all so very important? Can new spiritual teaching be anything but an offence to old, well-worn beliefs? Is it fair to allow unintelligible passages to prey upon you and then base your judgment of the whole upon them? Should not your conception of the whole be determined by its own life and being? "

Rudolf Steiner's Outline of Occult Science was lying on my table at that time. I can still see it there. It upset me, for I simply could not wade through it. If I read for any length of time a feeling of nausea came over me. All this mass of knowledge weighed like undigested food, and I had to read cautiously, never more than two or three pages at a time if I were not to get sick of it. And so it was quite a year before I knew what the book really contained. At that time I had not realised how one ought to assimilate such writings. To-day I know that people must be capable of reading in quite a new way if works like this are to convey what they really are. Here, in my opinion, is one of the great obstacles which hinders nearly everyone belonging to the older generation from getting anywhere near Rudolf Steiner. One must be able to read freely, with much more open-mindedness than is required with different kinds of writing, in order to avoid precipitate acceptance on the one hand and over-hasty denial on the other. One must let things rest as

they are, with very great inner tranquillity, and wait without being scared at the realisation that well-worn tradition is beginning to totter. One must read such books with inner activity, constantly putting what is read to the test of

life, and life to the test of what is read, so that one's own firm stand in life is fortified against the flood of new statements. And furthermore, one must be able to read meditatively, with constant and fairly long pauses, building up what has been read again within oneself and listening with calmness and unimpeded freedom to what one's own spirit and experience has to say to it. If a man does not do this, it will be left to future generations to discover the spirit and living essence of such books, and to him they will remain so much abstruse literature. How often in those years did I not feel: Whatever does this awful Saturn-evolution matter to me? Is it not all a temptation of the devil to divert man from the immediately pressing tasks of his life and hurl him into a morass of riddles out of which he will never find his way? In that first year I experienced all the feelings of contradiction and resistance which I encountered later on among those worthy fellow theologians of mine. The only thing to my credit was—that these feelings did not bring me to a standstill. Something within me said: If you turn away now, you will not be acting fairly towards the unknown. The question you must ask above all others is: What is true? It is not for you hurriedly to decide what kind of truth you want for yourself or consider useful to the world! You must learn slowly to think out a new world and yet not leave your immediate tasks undone. You must have patience, waiting to see how all this develops in the spirit and the soul!— Only very gradually did I begin to realise that by delving into world-evolution in the remote past, a man's character and spiritual freedom can be strengthened in regard to the problems of everyday life as well, and that only by this means will he become truly conscious of his origin and his manhood. All I could do at that time was to say to myself: "Well, after all, in three hundred years man's conception of the world will be quite different from ours to-day; and even

 if the only way in which this Theosophy helps is by drawing your attention, in its own strange and unfamiliar jargon, to current conceptions which otherwise would have passed you by, then it has rendered you a service which it will not be easy for anything else to render—at any rate in such a fundamental sense. Very well then, I will quite honestly let this wholly different picture of the world work upon me/'— That was the only decision I could bring bring myself to make.

One thing was soon clear to me: I could not give my lecture. Or at any rate I could only do so if I said quite frankly: "Here is something we do not yet understand.— For if this contains truth, the whole of modern spirituality presents a different aspect.” I had reached the most important turning-point. When I was reading Rudolf Steiner’s works, a faint voice would often whisper within me, but only gradually did I become attentive to it. It said: "If this man is right, you—with all your knowledge—are just a pigmy! You may as well begin all over again, and even then you will never get to the point of proving these things for yourself with these higher organs that are promised! And so, if you let any of this teaching get into you, you will start as a pupil again and remain one for the rest of your life. You will have to build up your spiritual outlook from its very foundations, at the moment when you thought you were standing as a teacher before men, and when, moreover, they were looking for and needing you. And in any case you will never get very far in this new sphere.” Those who have had actual experience of this inner voice hear it speaking in others—who do not themselves hear it. Here is an example : A man writes a learned book in which he shows that humanity does not need all this new wisdom, that it is already contained in religion "if men will only take it seriously;” or he proves that for everything "new” there are analogies in history which he has known for a long time. Or he may prove that "since Kant” nothing more can be known of the "thing-in-itself;” or he may prove that this new knowledge is not so important, that it simply diverts

 attention from “God,”—which is the most essential thing of all, and so forth.—But he whose ears are more delicately attuned, often becomes aware of the voice which speaks of the “pigmy.” He discerns it in the feeling of annoyance which makes him loth to embark upon a genuine examination of the new according to its own laws, but also in the attitude of false superiority which he adopts to the new in order to conceal his own inadequacies. Especially when I heard theologians say that what they found lacking in Anthroposophy was the proper “realisation of sin” and the “call to repentance,” I always wanted to ask: Perhaps the reason is that you do not want to “repent?” For there are many forms of repentance. Should not perhaps that kind of repentance which makes a man honest and brave enough to realise his own smallness in the presence of a new body of knowledge be laid upon an intellectual age

and a generation proud in spirit? Here indeed is the test of our attitude to the spirit. Here, too, maybe, the test of our age. Where are the men who say: "This is all still too new to us, we must thoroughly ponder over it." I did, however, come across a few, and among them University scholars, who said right out: "I simply cannot bring myself to study it, at all events not deeply enough. I should not be content to do anything else. But I have neither the time nor the energy. —It must be left to a younger generation. Not having put it to the test, however, I, at any rate, will not speak against it." That at least was honest, although not the reply which one might have hoped for from an avowed seeker after truth.

One can only earnestly advise those who want to see Rudolf Steiner in a true light to pay heed to the voice which speaks of the pigmy and not allow it to be hidden behind the cloak of erudition or piety. If the voice were not there, the book Knowledge of the Higher Worlds, for example, would have had a very different reception. In that book Rudolf Steiner says quite clearly how he arrived at his results. But it was killed by silence. Nobody came forward with the statement: "I, too, have had these experiences, but they are

 illusion.[0] Nobody said: "I, too, have developed these higher organs, but they have led me to different results." People are sharp enough to evade the decisive issue, or else they take refuge in scorn.—And now, what of this book Knowledge of the Higher Worlds? I procured a copy at once, because, as a "cultured man," I wanted to know something about the methods of investigation by which these results were obtained. But woe betide! The beginning of the book was splendid. The ethical precepts simply won my heart. But oh!—those "lotus-flowers." Two-petalled, sixteen-petalled, ten-petalled "higher spiritual organs" were revolving in the book! But in me nothing would revolve—not with the best will in the world! A great millwheel seemed to grind away in my brain, and a sense of hopelessness weighed upon my soul.

I should hardly have got any further if life had not led me to the new world from another side. And this was really the outcome of an inner preparation of destiny. In my early twenties I had sketched out a kind of plan for my life which was, for a period of some twenty years, to think and write about those who had opposed and championed Jesus, but side by side with this

work, to contemplate and speak about His words in order to write a comprehensive book about Him when I had reached the age of about forty. What should then ensue was left an open question. I hoped that it would emerge as an outcome of the book. Although I had not rigidly bound myself to keep to this plan of my youth, it happened that, at the age of thirty-eight, I already had behind me the preparatory work for the lectures which I then proposed to incorporate in the book on Jesus. But there was something strange about the work itself. It went on more unconsciously, not really admitted by myself and only later entered the region of clear consciousness.

When I tried to form a conception of the personality of Jesus from His words and acts, linking it up with the results of modern theological study, I kept coming across an incomprehensible mystery. A voice was always whispering: "This Jesus is not Jesus.—Even with the most cautious and

critical attitude of mind it is impossible to get at the essence of the words spoken by this Leader of mankind, if all that one has to rely upon is the mode of thought and experience current in the modern age. A great riddle is there, gazing at us again and again with unfathomable eyes. Neither dogma nor higher criticism can help us. What is the real truth about this Jesus? As men of the modern age can we not get to the reality which there confronts us? In what way must we think differently, learn differently, in order the better to understand this reality?" The whole impotence of current scientific theology revealed itself to me in face of the mystery of Christ. It was in this mood, when I was still quite sceptical, that I said to Michael Bauer, who had in the meantime become a friend of mine: "Ask your theosophical high priest to come some day in the Winter after I have given my lectures on Jesus and say what he has to say. I promise that I will listen without prejudice, as if I had to learn everything from the very beginning." In December, 1911, Rudolf Steiner actually came to the town and gave a lecture entitled "From Jesus to Christ." A little later on, when my lectures on Jesus had been published, I sent them to Rudolf Steiner and asked what he thought of them. He said that the picture of Jesus was correct and had pleased him, but that it was a picture of Jesus, not of Christ. On that subject a great deal more was to be said, and it would be a good thing if I were sometime to present a picture of Christ as I had done of Jesus.—Many years later in Berlin, after hearing a lecture by Rudolf Steiner in which the picture

of Jesus presented by modern theology came in for severe criticism, I said to him: “If this is your opinion of Weinel’s picture of Jesus, surely my book is subject to the same criticism?” “Oh no,” was the reply, “there is a great difference; the successor of Weinel is Arthur Drews; in your book there are elements which lead over to Anthroposophy.”

From the historical point of view these things seem to me worth mentioning. To-day it is still more apparent that “modern theology” at that time was actually standing at a

 parting of the ways. It was a question of turning to barren, unreliable history and rapidly losing all trace of real Christianity—or of discovering new methods of research which were better fitted to grapple with the realities of a higher world—or this theology was doomed to relapse into Catholicism, which is undeniably beginning to be the case to-day. My meeting with Rudolf Steiner took place in the setting of a great background of spiritual history.—

♦ * * • ♦

It was on August 28th, 1911, the anniversary of Goethe's birthday, that I saw Rudolf Steiner for the first time. I had to go on a short journey and I managed to attend the Theosophical Summer Conference at Munich on the Sunday. For six months, practically all my spare time had been devoted to reading Dr. Steiner's works, but I still had no thought as yet of joining the Society. In spite of this, I was allowed to attend all the meetings without any kind of obligation.

When I went into the room I was surprised at the atmosphere I found there. The audience, for the most part, gave one an impression of strangeness. A certain type of passive, sensation-mongering mentality troubled me. Especially when I saw men with long hair, my impulse was to run away. Later on, all these things changed decidedly for the better, when the "theosophical" shells were laid aside and Rudolf Steiner began to attract more and more men of a scientific turn of mind. He certainly suffered a great deal in those earlier years, but out of respect for personal freedom he did not on principle enter into external trivialities of this kind and tried gradually to educate the people from within.

What pleased me was the evidence of a mood of festive devotion. It was not difficult to see that this was a festival of man. These people were filled with joy that they were in the presence of one whom they felt to be quite out of the common, a leader worthy of all respect, and who yet went about among them as a man among other men. Although

I felt an outsider, and was repelled by many things I saw, I was interested to find how genuinely and sincerely a man was being regarded as an "event" in humanity. Everything breathed in honour of manhood, for these people felt themselves in the presence of a great figure of the human race. Something of this kind must have been experienced before one can realize the silent effect which a single individual can have upon those around him. This was particularly in evidence during the dramatic performances. Those who took part were not presenting their art with an eye to Press and public, but as if they felt a higher being looking through them, and they were

therefore striving without personal vanity to offer their sacrifices in the revealed presence of a Divine world. Quite a new conception of art as worship arose within me.

Between the performances Dr. Steiner gave a short address. I cannot honestly say that it made any particular impression upon me. The ears for what might have been significant were, of course, not yet open, and many outer stumbling-blocks had still to be overcome. The rather roundabout and involved style of many of Dr. Steiner's phrases was explained, as I gathered in a later conversation, by the fact that he was taking stock of the particular make-up of his listeners. I sat in a far corner of the hall, determined under no circumstances to allow myself to be carried away by mass suggestion, but also fully open to every impression. Again and again I asked myself: What would you take this man to be if you met him in the street?—Most probably a Catholic priest, I said to myself. But then I should only have been looking at the black coat, for which as a clergyman I had a peculiar dislike, and not the face. I was glad to be able to investigate without any disturbance, under the protection of complete detachment. As one who had suffered much from living among fashionable preachers, I had a very sharp eye for evidence of human weaknesses which cast their shadows over what a greatly revered man had to teach. With absolute assurance I say that stories which accuse Rudolf Steiner of vanity or a desire for effect,

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 27 are absolutely false. They were based upon fleeting, untried first impressions, and they fell utterly to the ground in his actual presence. If ever there has been an embodiment of the reverse of personal vanity, it was Rudolf Steiner. And as for striving after effect—he was not only much too sincere but much too able for that.

And so my first impression was that every possibility was still open. After the lecture I saw, not without amusement, that he became the centre of an admiring circle. He could hardly take a single step without treading on the toes of one or another of his adherents. This state of things, too, improved as the years went by and people began to realise more what they owed him. On that occasion, however, I did not let myself be deterred from going up to him, eager as to what the result would be. Having had a hint from Michael Bauer, I went up to thank Rudolf Steiner for the privilege of having been

admitted as a guest, asking if I might come again in the evening. He looked at me for one fleeting moment and his eyes fell to the ground. It seemed to me as if this was his way of getting a picture of the spiritual being of a man in a flash before him. Then he said dryly: “If you were present this morning, you can come this evening as well"—and passed on. Those were the first words I had with him.

In the evening there was a special lecture (not part of the course which was being given), in memory of Goethe. The Goethe presented in this lecture was a new experience to me. This was not the poet Goethe, nor the man Goethe, but Goethe the world-thinker. The independence, assurance and power with which he spoke of Goethe raised Rudolf Steiner in my eyes to a high spiritual rank. I felt much more confident that his message was suited to the needs of his time. One learnt to look into Nature in her freedom through Goethe’s all-seeing eyes. When I listened to theologians speaking of Goethe, they were always wont to drag out, from every conceivable corner, utterances that savoured in any way of religion. When they referred to the sciences, they would flirt with them for a while, finally

 abandon them to their own limitations and set up their "God” in haunts impenetrable to the light of scientific research. Not so Rudolf Steiner. He let Goethe be Goethe. He himself was looking into the world with Goethe’s eyes. But he brought greater power into those eyes, and a richer, more spiritual world in which there was room for all the Gods of men—above all the God of the Christians. Here, in very truth, was a kingly mind in the realms of knowledge, far-seeing and mighty in its freedom. He let a science of Nature come to flower around us, a wisdom far more stimulating than the dead knowledge of the day and a science in which religion could breathe anew. With a joyful premonition that greatness in the truly religious sense is compatible with the utmost clarity of thought and the freest spirit of investigation, I went home.

Three months later found me on my way to hear Rudolf Steiner lecture in Nuremberg on the theme: "From Jesus to Christ.” I had also persuaded certain friends, among them one or two doctors, to go to the lecture.—"We will listen without bias and see whether this man may not have more to say

about Christ than I myself would be capable of saying.” The lecture was a disappointment. Even outer details irritated me: the fur coat in which he came, the glasses through which he eyed his audience, the conspicuous black tie. And yet I said to a neighbour with whom I had made friends: "Just look at this man. If anyone in this age is a superman, there he is!” After the lecture I thought sorrowfully: Now I know that here is another man who can say nothing about Christ to satisfy me. I must give up all hope of finding anything that will help in my own sphere of religion.—I did not like the prosaic way of speaking about physical processes in the Christ —"salt-forming processes,” processes of "combustion” and the like. I could not as yet bring Dr. Steiner’s words to life within my own soul, and took them too literally in the sense of external science. Four years afterwards, at the end of a lecture during which I may have had the same feelings, Rudolf Steiner came straight up to me and said pointedly, although I had not

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 29 said a word of what I was thinking: “I have a deliberate purpose in speaking of these things in this way. To speak differently would be too great a shock to people. Wait until these things have developed for another fifty years and then see how they will work themselves out in the life of feeling and will!” In that Nuremberg lecture only one impression was strong and positive: it was the extraordinary spiritual power and mobility of expression which played over Rudolf Steiner’s face while he was speaking. At one moment he looked quite young, the next sallow with age; one moment he had the virility of a man, the next the fragile delicacy of a woman; one moment he was the dry teacher, the next an inspired Dionysus. I watched this interplay with growing interest, for I had never seen anything like it before. Compared with other speakers to whom I had listened, here, to say the least, was a power of change ten times greater, and an undreamed-of range of inner possibilities. Great superiority of the spirit over the body perhaps? A vast wealth of spiritual life? Perhaps after all a superman?—Or on the way to him?—After the lecture I asked Dr. Steiner if I might have a talk with him.

Now that I was on the point of meeting him personally, I said to Michael Bauer: “There is one thing that really makes me feel uneasy. Suppose he actually sees the aura? ” A faint smile of satisfaction crept into Michael Bauer’s eyes: “But after all—God knows it all,” he said. And then came a

burst of egotism: “What care I for what he sees. He can see what he likes.” In front of the Hotel Maximilian, where Rudolf Steiner was staying at the time, this thought once again passed through my mind: You, yourself, have a large following, and this man a very small one ; if he is right, in twenty years his will be large and yours small. But at any rate he has a right to meet human beings who do not ask that question.

Upstairs, Rudolf Steiner was standing in the half-opened door through which another visitor had just passed. He watched me closely as I walked slowly up the stairs. I have never seen anyone who could look at another so attentively.

It was as if he let the being of the other man be built up before him in a subtle element of his own soul, while he himself remained immobile, in selfless surrender. It was not as if he were thinking about the other man, but there seemed to be a process of inner, spiritual reflecting in which his whole existence could be revealed. Not until much later did I understand the raison d’être of this observant gaze, when Dr. Steiner once said that the way a man walks can disclose a great deal about his earlier incarnations.

My first remarks to Dr. Steiner cannot have been exactly pleasant for him. “I am not very interested in your occult teachings,” I said. “My experiences lie in the sphere of religion, and I see endless tasks before me there. Moreover I have no gift for occultism and apart from that I am afraid of the effect it might have on the nerves. But I would like to ask you certain things about the further development of man.” Rudolf Steiner listened to this patiently, and seemed to be quietly observing. He sat facing me with his back to the light. A considerable part of the small room was taken up by his travelling trunk, so that I could not see his face clearly. He did not move, but the leg which was crossed over the other gave evidence of his inner alertness. ”Your occultism is not intelligible to me,” I went on. “But you are always repeating that it can be understood by the healthy reasoning powers of man. I conclude from this that to you it is intelligible. But if you understand it and others do not, it may possibly be the unconscious outcome of thought and only give the appearance of having been discovered by clairvoyance.” Evasively, but without a trace of irritation, Rudolf Steiner replied: “I can only say that thought alone would never have brought me to

these results; it was not until afterwards that their truth was revealed to thought as well." But this again I could not grasp. Is there any reason why a man cannot unconsciously bear two different faculties of thought within him, one which imagines itself to be thought and another which is really thought? Even to-day, this first objection of mine seems to me more intelligent than most of those put forward by opponents which I have read.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 31 But it was quite obvious that Rudolf Steiner did not take it very seriously. He knew that the battle would be waged in another sphere.—We began to speak of the doctrine of reincarnation. I said that I had no doubt of man's continued existence and development after death, but whether for that purpose he had to return to the earth seemed to me questionable, to say the least of it. Nor did I find any mention of it in the Bible. "No," replied Rudolf Steiner, "reincarnation is not a doctrine of Christendom. It is a fact that is revealed in occult investigation. That must be accepted, for such is the case." Again the same cool evasion. Suddenly he began: "But why do you say that you have no gift for occultism? I wanted to say it before. You have quite a good gift for it." And then all at once he gave four suggestions for exercises in answer to my question about the further development of man. They struck me as curious in the extreme. "That seems strange to you. But nevertheless it is so."

When I was in the street again, I asked myself: What is this man really getting at ? Did he make any attempt to win you as an adherent? I pondered and had to admit: No, not the very slightest. But—what about those exercises? Will they not lead into an unknown world? Are you not allowing yourself to become dependent on another? What about suggestion, magic? Perhaps this is the most insidious attempt of all to make you a follower I

For about a month I did not embark upon the exercises, but then a certain sense of duty prevailed. "You will never be able to form an opinion of these things if you know nothing about them," I said to myself. "And not so much for the sake of your own interests but for the sake of mankind and what mankind demands of you, you should not ignore them. Have you not wished for knowledge of your own about the further evolution of man? And did not Rudolf Steiner see at once that this was the only way in which you

could be convinced? Are you not old enough to feel yourself secure, provided only that you proceed with caution? At any rate you will not venture upon a single step

without fully realising what you are doing. Nor will you do any exercise unless you have discovered and understood its purport and necessity from your own life and have steeped it in your own thought.—Very well then, you will be assimilating it all in your own way. Again and again you will have to put yourself to the test to discover if you are treading this new path out of self-interest or in pursuit of selfless aims. You will have to make the resolution to stop instantly you find anything that is dubious from the ethical point of view, or unfathomable by the mind. If you proceed like this, nothing can happen to you and you can be confident that your life will be well and truly guided."

In this frame of mind I began the exercises and told Dr. Steiner at our next meeting that for me there could be no other way. I told him that I myself never meditated upon his words exactly as he had spoken them, but in the form in which they came to me when I followed the direction to which they seemed to point. He thoroughly approved of this method of mine, and indeed helped me by elaborating and expanding my own thoughts in a way with which I fully concurred. Only gradually did it begin to dawn on me that my safeguarding measures erred on the side of overcautiousness, and that my own experiences were leading me to the conclusion that Dr. Steiner's phraseology was right.

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In view of the utterly false and dangerous notions that are spread abroad in regard to these "exercises," let me here speak in somewhat greater detail. It must not be imagined that by means of these exercises a man will quickly attain higher knowledge. In the vast majority of cases it will certainly not be so. Their effect is much more often experienced in wholly unexpected domains. In my own case, for example, the first effect was that I felt much more physically healthy. The exercises were like a healing bath or a refreshing bodily exercise, only more spiritual and life-giving. One's whole organism became more normal, more har-

 monised.* Lost instincts as to what was right for the body returned. Neurasthenic symptoms abated. In this way one began to realise that neurasthenia is not to be cured by relaxation and change, or by doing nothing, but by a healthy strengthening of inner activity as a counteraction to the exhaustion caused by outer life. Another result was an enhancement of the power of mental achievement. To begin with, perhaps, this was experienced in the fact that one became more observant of moments when the mind wandered, moments of unconscious dreaming and sleeping. After a few months I needed only about half the usual time for mental work. Another result was that one looked at flowers and plants and loved them in quite a different way, and had a much subtler observation of other human beings. Spiritual faculties were stimulated. Actual facts of higher knowledge were not yet there, except perhaps in the form of dim premonitions, but there was a comforting sense of assurance of having found the way to the spirit. I have never experienced any bodily ill-effects, with the exception of a very few which it was quite easy to avoid or correct, although I carried out the exercises with all the force of which I was capable. Everyone who has had exercises from Rudolf Steiner says the same. On closer scrutiny it is at once apparent that the few examples quoted by opponents in the contrary sense are untenable evidence. Let it be emphasised here that not one of these persons had received from Rudolf Steiner exercises leading to the actual development of higher organs. He only gave such exercises to a very few. In every other case the exercises

were of a more general spiritual and moral character, verses of meditation and words from the Bible of which everyone who knows

•It is rather against the grain to go further into this point. But calumnies spread abroad by opponents to the effect that Rudolf Steiner's exercises made people ill, and that I myself am an example of this, must be put an end to. The truth is exactly the reverse. These exercises gave rise to a first real joy in life, and a comforting sense of health in an organism that from youth onwards had been far too sensitive. That is what actually happened. When, later on, this state of things altered for a time, again the cause was not due to Rudolf Steiner but to the aftereffects of a fall in the mountains, which injured the membranes of the 3

what they were will say that they simply could not lead to bodily harm. Nobody would wish to abolish drilling because under certain conditions a few isolated individuals have been harmed by it. Bearing this in mind as a comparison, one begins to realise how brilliantly Rudolf Steiner stood the test of a true spiritual teacher. He was also exceedingly cautious and conscientious when he was giving advice. To those who saw the pains he would take in such moments (I saw him many a time and observed with close attention), it was as though they were witnessing a conscientiousness so alert that it had no parallel anywhere. The very words and tones of voice indicated deliberation which had the delicate spiritual facts before it and yet expressed itself in the most human, kindly way. Just as one can learn to trust a doctor after watching him at a sick-bed, so did a profound trust in Rudolf Steiner grow up in those moments.

I have spoken to a hundred people who had. had advice from him. Again and again one was amazed at the number of human lives which had come before the eyes of his soul, how utterly he had surrendered himself, and with what reliable and penetrating insight he had guided them. Many a time when I heard of advice given by him I was astonished at the light it shed upon a man's being. Not one single soul has ever told me, even in the most intimate confidence, of any harm experienced as the outcome of Dr. Steiner's advice. All who had followed that advice spoke without exception in tones of deepest gratitude, saying that they had received immeasurable benefit, an unfailing stimulus, inner joy in life and illuminating spiritual

knowledge. All of them, without exception, felt that they had set their feet on a trustworthy path to the spirit.

The world-historic hour is upon us when man must take his spiritual education more into his own hands. He will

brain and made all mental exertion, and the exercises, impossible for many months. The exercises never did any harm, but, on the contrary, once more helped to bring about a cure. It is an obligation of gratitude to Rudolf Steiner to state this publicly in order to contradict rumours of another kind.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 35 succumb to the overwhelming pressure of external life if he does not learn to be strong in the spirit. In our day, meditation is the true means for counteracting the neurasthenia that is breaking in upon us. The new ritual/ built up in accordance with the spirit, is also a strongly healing meditation. Humanity will simply go to its ruin if men do not learn to take into themselves the forces which can only flow with any permanency by way of meditation, that is to say, an inner life and development sustained by the power of the spirit. But working counter to this help—new both in style and in magnitude—there is ancient spiritual teaching, teaching which does not leave man free but harks back to the Middle Ages. And there is also an opposing will, too lethargic or too timid to set out upon the new paths. Out of this will rise sullen clouds of antagonism and poisoned hatred which keep man from seeing and receiving the new. But after all—are not human beings themselves guilty if they are more inclined to believe the often diabolical misrepresentations of opponents than the evidence of those who are actually treading these new paths?

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Nearly nine months had passed before I saw Rudolf Steiner again. It seemed to me right at that time that I should be carrying on my studies at a certain distance. It enabled me to make my own freedom the more secure. It was by my experiences in connection with the exercises, even more than the reading of anthroposophical literature, that the doors to the new world were being opened. Apart from the fact that I discovered a realm of health-giving spirituality—the rejection of which could only have been to my own great

detriment—apart from a realisation that these teachings were undoubtedly in line with the healthy development of man and of mankind, it became more and more apparent that my fear of the "occult" was wholly without foundation. Although, to begin with, the impressions from the spiritual world were primitive in the extreme, •Dr. Rittehneyer is here referring to the ritual of The Christian Community.

there was nothing uncanny about them, nor anything that threatened the nerves, as I had anticipated. It was as though they came from a world of light, in which all fear ceased. My confidence was strengthened by the fact that I never experienced any of the things I had expected but, on the contrary, something quite different. Moreover, the conceptions I myself had formed on the basis of Dr. Steiner's descriptions proved themselves to be inadequate. His own statements, on the other hand, were often confirmed from quite unexpected quarters. I was simply incapable of exercising self-suggestion. There were exercises which I attempted practically every day over a period of many years but never perfected. All these things—which cannot, of course, be gone into in detail—gradually dispersed the suspicion of suggestion and auto-suggestion to which I tried to -hold as long as possible, and gave a sense of security and independence. But what gave me the greatest confidence of all was the fact that the exercises were an unexpected source of help in my own particular sphere of life—that of religion. Impressions became purer, deeper, stronger. For this alone my deepest gratitude would have been due to Rudolf Steiner. And those for whom my calling made me responsible received the benefit of it, although they had no idea of its source.

When I went to visit Dr. Steiner in Munich in August, 1912, another "theosophical" festival was just over. Two days after the final meeting, at about eight o'clock in the evening, some ten or eleven people who wanted to speak to him were sitting in the waiting-room, full of deep but at the same time not repellent respect, and would take up his time until long past midnight. I was told that the whole day long he worked with these people, and by night wrote his Mystery Plays, which were then taken to the printer in the early morning, and immediately rehearsed on the stage. But Dr. Steiner was fresh and alert, without a trace of fatigue. People will have to face the astounding fact that he often spent many nights at a stretch with

only about an hour's rest. Indeed without this faculty it is impossible to explain what

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 37 he accomplished in his life, purely from the point of view of time. That alone is a phenomenon which the modern mind is incapable of grasping. Later on, in the year 1919, I felt a great wish for some means of understanding this enigma. I began by asking, in a matter-of-fact way, if it was possible in any way to cut down the hours of sleep, and so extend one's working hours. Dr. Steiner at once went into my question, and said in an equally matter-of-fact way, using the impersonal style he nearly always adopted on such occasions, what "one" would have to do. He was satisfied that I should not make any misuse of what he said, even as applied to myself. But as I do not know if he spoke about it to anyone else, I will only say briefly that there is an exercise in concentration which can be a substitute for sleep and reduce the need for rest to an eighth of the normal period. "But it must not be done always," he said. "In between there must be real sleep." So there is a means. The only pity of it is that people are incapable of applying it. I, myself, have never been able to do so, except for a few seconds. When Dr. Steiner spoke of matters like this, it was in an absolutely natural way, without the faintest breath of self-aggrandisement or conceit. Nobody on earth could have wrenched his secret from him if he did not wish to divulge it. By the telling of a fact like this, he confirmed his teachings and opened up a mighty vista into the future of mankind.

"Do not worry because there are people waiting," he said as he received me. "We will talk over everything we have to say quite quietly, to the end." Again my questions were mainly concerned with the higher development of man. In everything I said and asked I found myself in the presence of an unmistakable expert. There was nothing I could say that he did not seem already to know. Whereas in other conversations I had had with outstanding men I always refrained from speaking about certain experiences because one was accustomed to find no understanding, here I could touch upon whatever intimate and delicate subjects I liked and was always answered by genuine human kindliness and

a superior power that could not but inspire every confidence. But I was by no means such an “obedient, humble servant,” that I did not blurt out: “Are you really looking at my aura the whole time? ” For years I always gave way to the impulse to put questions like this to Dr. Steiner when I was with him. Coming as something of a surprise, they seemed to offer good opportunity for observing the subtler emotions of a man. He did not seem to dislike it, and would sometimes allude to this habit of mine. On that particular occasion a barely perceptible smile flitted across his face. “I always have to adjust myself a little for that,” he said kindly. “But in your case it is not so very difficult.” Not wishing to be snubbed, however, I abstained from asking any further question on the subject. Three years later I again asked boldly about this question of the aura. I had come across several people endowed with mediumistic clairvoyance who had made definite statements. Two of them had agreed in what they said, but the third had said something qutie different. I now put the question to Dr. Steiner without having told him of my other experiences. He agreed with the first two people. When I told him about the third he replied: “He will have been seeing the complementary colours. They sometimes shoot through a man without his being conscious of it.” That this was correct was proved yet a second time : as before, two people agreed and a third said the opposite.

An essay of mine on the work of Christ had appeared in a compendium entitled Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. I had sent it to Dr. Steiner and I now asked him what, in his opinion, was incorrect in it. “There is nothing incorrect,” he answered. “But see here,”—and he tore a sheet of paper from a block and drew a small circle on it. “That is you.” Then he carefully drew another circle near the first but not touching it. “That is Ernst Haeckel.” And then a large circle was drawn around the other two. “And that is Spiritual Science.” He might have said: “And that is I,” but he avoided the word “I.” On that occasion it was not for my own amusement to see this

 instructive picture in which he so unmistakably conveyed what I lacked, and at the same time the realisation of his own superiority. But the spirit in which he spoke was so pure and true that only a fool could fail to have been delighted with it.

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A few months later, when I saw Dr. Steiner in Nuremberg, I had thought out something along very definite lines. In the intervening period the exercises had made me realise more and more clearly that something like a "life-body" (etheric body) actually exists. It has its own centres which do not exactly coincide with the physical organs, and are distinguished from these by a much more spiritual sense of life. This body also has its own currents of life which to a certain extent a man can learn to control. He can become aware of his own life-body and then clearly perceive where it is more highly and where it is less developed. I was burning to know if Dr. Steiner saw in a man the same things he can know out of himself. According to his writings, it must certainly be so. But perhaps he said what was true noi as the outcome of direct perception but because he could in some way read what the human being in front of him was thinking and expecting, getting it from the consciousness of the other. And so I tried to safeguard myself against this. At home I fixed firmly in my mind my own impressions of what was still undeveloped and what showed signs of developing, and then I deliberately killed all these thoughts. As if by chance I then asked Dr. Steiner about the life-body and tried desperately to think about other matters. But it was almost frightening how he began to describe with the precision and assurance of a scientific investigator who has an object before him, things which I alone could have known. In spite of this my caution was not yet satisfied. A year later I repeated the experiment. The incentive was the greater because in the intervening period a great deal had changed in this "hfe-body," was indeed quite reversed. Again I fortified myself and began to ask questions. On

this and all other occasions Dr. Steiner went into them willingly and without hesitation. Perhaps he would say now and then: "I know of course that you are asking out of a sincere interest in knowing the truth." On this particular occasion when I had put my question, he began at once with the words —"To my surprise, a great deal has changed; I had not expected this." . . . And again he described with the precision of a scientist, only making what I already knew still clearer to me. I know, of course, that a scientist of to-day cannot yet regard experiences of this kind as being "proof." On the other hand I know that a younger generation to whom spiritual truths come much

more naturally will not quite understand why one felt it necessary to make such tests. Yet I am glad that I did not neglect them. And I have every reason for thinking that Rudolf Steiner was not annoyed at my attitude but, on the contrary, that he was glad to be met with cautious personal investigation. Experiences like this—which were repeated many times—gradually melted the feeling of mistrust which at the beginning one seemed bound to maintain. And although the same attitude of alertness and critical investigation was maintained on every subsequent occasion, there was quite sufficient inducement and indeed a sense of obligation to continue one's investigations along these paths.

If I am to describe what one experienced in the environment of Rudolf Steiner, I must not entirely refrain from speaking of the conversations on the subject of reincarnation. A present generation may make scandalous misuse of such narratives, but a coming generation has the right to know something of this from the personal side, and they will be grateful for it. As my studies of Spiritual Science proceeded, it dawned on me that even as a child, and again and again later on, up to the age of twenty-one, I had lived with the idea that I had existed more than once upon the earth. This thought lived a second life, as it were, side by side with the spiritual life I had as the son of a Protestant clergyhouse. I had never spoken of it to anyone. It was not so much a question of personalities in whom one believed oneself to

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 41 have lived in the past, or at least this was so only at odd moments and without any conviction—but much more of times and groups of people with whom one felt an inner kinship. When I read a history of the world for the first time— it was at the age of eight—this feeling of kinship had arisen and since then had forced itself upon me again and again from different angles. It was only from my twenty-first year onwards, when I had passed quite consciously into the spirit of the times and found it impossible any longer to reconcile these inner impressions with modern conceptions, that the idea of reincarnation wholly faded away. As a matter of fact I had written an article in the Suddeutsche Monatshefte in which I argued that the concrete idea of reincarnation (I was only acquainted with it then in its Indian-Theosophical form), was in its concreteness preferable in many respects to the Christian conception of the life beyond, but yet was irreconcilable with Christianity

and merely in its implications expressed certain needs of the human soul to which regard must be paid. But now the fundamental question arose once again, and I had to confess that the objections of Christianity could not be sustained in face of the teaching of reincarnation as given by Rudolf Steiner. I was eager to know how far what he had to tell me personally in this connection bore out what I myself had thought. ïn answer to my question he at once mentioned the period, but added—"I would rather not say any more. Such impressions are apt, even with me, to become too rigid when I express them in words. I would rather make closer examination before saying anything else." I had asked him about the period, not about any particular personality. The spiritual tact which seemed to be born in Dr. Steiner's presence told me quite definitely that one could not ask about that. But still I did want to know something more, and I added: "Your teachings are so foreign to me that I do not think I can ever have come into contact with them in a former life." "You did not," was the answer. And then he directed my attention to Christianity, and to certain elements in my character which he saw more clearly than I

 did at that time, for instance, elements that bore on the choice of the texts of my first sermons, of which of course he knew absolutely nothing. At the end of this rich conversation when I had already got up to go, Dr. Steiner asked me if I would like to be a guest at the private lecture he was giving that evening to members of the Theosophical Society. He was right in thinking that I should have liked to say yes. But I did not want to take a single step which I myself did not feel to be absolutely necessary. And so I allowed an engagement, which was a genuine one, although it might have been let slip, serve as an excuse. Here again there was an opportunity of getting to know Rudolf Steiner as a man. He did not interfere with my freedom with so much as a shadow of displeasure.

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A few more words about my conversations with Dr. Steiner on the subject of reincarnation may not be out of place. Most cultured people to-day still think, in spite of Lessing and Goethe, that to assume the truth of reincarnation is semi-lunacy, and the statement that it is possible to know anything of previous incarnations seems to them wilder still. Although the most personal details in this domain do not belong to the realm of publicity, and the narrative must for that reason be somewhat lacking in vividness and concreteness, yet for all that, the way in which Rudolf Steiner spoke of reincarnation is such a rich legacy for mankind that it must not be withheld. Not by the faintest breath did he pander to personal vanity. On the contrary, one saw him deliberately taking the greatest pains to efface anything that might have stimulated this vanity. He was equally impervious to questions prompted by mere curiosity. I saw him many times when others were asking him questions. Like an absolutely reliable guardian of the things of the spirit, and without much effort, he evaded all attempts, direct or indirect, to "get something out of him." He pointed to the objective connections and firmly resisted all personal sensationalism. Just as the very least sensitive-

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 43 ness to the situation made it impossible to ask: "Who was I in a previous incarnation?"—so it would most certainly have been out of the question to ask: "Who were you?" The result of that would have been that Rudolf Steiner would have cold-shouldered the questioner for a very long time to come. His attitude in the Krishnamurti affair shows that he regarded it as the greatest occult sin to claim authority for anyone on the ground of previous incarnations. In the age of the "Consciousness Soul" everyone must appeal with his teaching simply and solely to men's own objective sense of truth, and convince them purely on the basis of reason. Historically, Rudolf Steiner's position was all the more difficult because he held that the time has now come when individual human beings, too, must know more of their origin and true place in life. Before very long it will be impossible for man to cope with existence if he does not realise that the guiding threads of his life lead out far beyond the limits of his present existence. But Rudolf Steiner regarded any even half unconscious flippancy about earlier incarnations as a pest.

Indeed he used this very expression on more than one occasion. That is why everyone who has passed through his training is so horrified to hear it stated in the theosophical "Liberal Catholic Church" that the places of the Apostles and medieval Saints are already assigned. Indeed very few are left vacant!—And then the whole matter is openly discussed in the newspapers!

I once asked Dr. Steiner why it was that people were so prone to imagine themselves as the incarnations of significant personalities, and whether there was any reason for this, apart from the factor of human vanity. He said that one has a clearer picture of those with whom one has lived than of oneself and that this is so even in the present life. In the group of people around him he suppressed everything that tended to self-satisfaction and sensationalism— and with good effect. I was often surprised to find how little talk went on in the Society during Dr. Steiner's lifetime about the details of reincarnation—much less, indeed, than one would have expected in view of human egotism.

But it would have brought down a torrent of wrath from him, and everyone knew it. On the other hand, what he did was to stimulate individuals to inner activity in this domain : "Try to get at it for yourself." "Read about that epoch and see what impressions you have." "We will speak about it again later on." To me, one of the most remarkable things about him was the number of secrets which he consciously carried about locked up within him, taking them finally through death without revealing them to a single soul. Not once would he let himself be enticed into giving even a hint. It might well have happened that conclusions could have been drawn from some chance remark or other. But this was never the case with Rudolf Steiner. He only said what would help, and avoided everything that might do harm, even in the future. If only people could have seen how he spoke of these matters in personal conversation! His great dark eyes became even more alert. With a consciousness of responsibility than which nothing greater or purer could be imagined, he spoke every word with hesitation. It was as if, all unseen, he had passed into a temple where he was acting before the eyes of higher powers. One could have wished that all the sensitive minds of humanity had been present to witness such a spectacle! If the teaching of reincarnation were to be renewed in a Christian sense it could not have been entrusted to a more scrupulous mind. Quite apart from

my own opinion about reincarnation, I often said to myself, when I listened to Dr. Steiner speaking about this question: “If I were Providence itself and seeking for a man of sufficient moral greatness to be entrusted with knowledge of these things and speak of them, a man who is big enough to cope with the dangers to himself and others, choice could fall on no one better.”—But be that as it may: Rudolf Steiner’s way of treating this realm of life is like a sacred legacy, bequeathed not only to the Anthropo-sophical Society but to all mankind.

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Again there was a period of six months of quiet study

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 45 and concrete examination of Anthroposophy before I saw Dr. Steiner in Stuttgart on my return from a journey to Switzerland. What stands out in my memory is a conversation about the Gospel of St. John. I said something to the effect that the revelational character of this Gospel seemed to me to be strongly indicated by the fact that in the passages on death spoken by Christ before His Departure, the word “Father” occurs where one would have expected the word “Death.” Rudolf Steiner looked at me with interest. “So you have discovered that? I had to travel a much longer occult path before I discovered it. Of course one sees it then from a rather different point of view. But it is certainly possible also to get at such truths purely by the path of religion.” Then of his own accord he began to speak of the pamphlet I had written in collaboration with my friend Dr. Geyer and had sent him to read. Its title was: ^Why do we remain in the Church?”—“I read it,” he said, “but I do not think that is the way to get on.” At that point I ought to have asked: “Why not? ”—but I was much too deeply bound up with the struggles and hopes of the Church at that moment. I was still hoping to fight my own way in the Church, just as I was. And so I let the opportunity slip. An unconscious sense of fear that further conversation on this subject might lead to unwelcome consequences for me, and the more conscious impulse that I did not want my outer life to be influenced by Rudolf Steiner before I was inwardly clear about his world, indeed I wanted my outer life to be determined wholly by my own inner promptings—all this induced me to make an evasive reply. “Perhaps our innermost wishes are better than our

reasoning powers," I said. Dr. Steiner understood at once and, as always in such cases, let the subject drop quite naturally and passed on to speak of other things.

Another six months went by. I had realised for a long time now that destiny might demand that I should openly declare myself in support of Anthroposophy. I wanted to be prepared for that hour, for a whole life-time was at stake, possibly involving the sacrifice of what had hitherto been

my calling. It is one thing for a man to whom a large following in Germany was looking, and another for a young man who throws himself enthusiastically into something that has gripped his mind and heart. I saw the people around me. They trusted me and I felt a deep responsibility to them. Many, indeed most of them, would not be able to go with me and would be disappointed. For when I first began to speak about these things in public, I had a period of many years' study already behind me and could not now take the people through all the stages of my investigations. I could not think of publicly ranging myself on the side of this new body of teaching until I was absolutely sure of my own ground. But then it would be a shattering blow to my congregation. It was not, as opponents like to put it, a case of someone in whom a lack of independent judgment or bodily exhaustion had one day made him the victim of a subtle hypnotist. For nearly five years I had devoted practically all the spare time I had from my profession to the theoretical and, above all, the practical study of Anthroposophy. My object was to take stock of my responsibility to humanity and then have the right to speak with authority. Is there anyone among the opponents who has applied anything like the same amount of time and earnest investigation before writing against Anthroposophy? And above all, is there any one of them who has really tested it in his own experience? More than once I have found that men with a name and a position in public life asked for anthroposophical literature on the naïve pretext that they were proposing to write or speak about the subject in the near future. And it was a very near future indeed! Conversations with those who really knew their subject were not sought for, and sometimes deliberately avoided. There was one outstanding case where the person in question did not even wait to receive books which could have served as a real introduction to Anthroposophy. From my own personal experience I

know that many of the writings which were afterwards taken seriously by the public, originated in this way.

But we are only in the year 1913. When Dr. Steiner came to Nuremberg, at the beginning of the winter, I had a great many questions to ask him. The course of the conversations was always the same.—For an hour or so I would ask question after question, as I had formulated them to myself beforehand. He was always ready to answer. The store of knowledge from which he drew astonished me more and more. What surprised me most of all was that he had never tried to impress this upon me. He gave just what was needed for answering the particular question, no more. On very rare occasions would come the reply: "I have not yet looked into that."—"May I ask you something, Herr Doctor," I would often begin. "Ask whatever you like." And then the question was given back again, and the problem was whether one could ask it at all and what one was going to ask. How deeply I have regretted that I was not more intelligent in my questions! An incredible store of interesting facts would have come to light and could then have been pondered upon in freedom. For Dr. Steiner never asked for agreement. He simply told and left it to produce its own effect. Sometimes it may have happened that, astonished by the assurance in his answers, I asked him: "Have you really never been mistaken in your investigations and been obliged to correct them afterwards?"—"I have never spoken of what I wasn't quite sure of," he said. Still I was not satisfied.—"I mean, have you not on closer scrutiny had to correct your first impressions and results of research? " —"Yes, but then there is always an obvious reason for it. For instance, if I meet you in a fog and do not recognise you, the fog itself is a factor which must then be taken into account." Still I would not give way. "Has it never happened that you had to admit afterwards: *1 was wrong there?"" He thought quietly for a minute or two. "Well, yes," he said, "in human beings I have sometimes been deceived. But after all, with people, something from outer life will often creep in that one cannot foresee."

Occasionally we came to a point in the conversation where I asked in surprise: "If this is so, why do you not tell it

to the world?" "Because the world to-day is not yet capable of receiving such truths." He spoke these words quietly and objectively, without any facetiousness or tragic pose. And they were, as a matter of fact, truths which obviously require a lengthy education on the part of humanity before men can freely put them to the test. My own impression—and it grew stronger as the years went by—is that Rudolf Steiner had a store of world-knowledge of which, to his dying day, not a single one of his intimates heard a word. He spoke as an educator, never as a mere revealer. Anything else was out of the question. He entrusted very much to mankind, without regard to the counterblasts it would bring him, but he was absolutely relentless in saying only what was necessary and could be borne at the given moment.

At the end of that meeting with Dr. Steiner he asked me once more: "Would you like to come to my private lecture to Members of the Society this evening?" He added, out of kindness and in order to make it easier for me to agree: "I am going to speak of certain things from the history of the early years of Jesus which are not found in the Gospels." "What, you really venture that?" I asked—"Do you think one would venture if it were not a necessity?" was the rejoinder. "It is the will of the spiritual world that in this age men shall be told more about these things. Time will show why."

The evening that followed will remain in my memory, far beyond the bournes of this life, as one of the most wonderful in my experience. A hundred or so people had gathered in the narrow premises where the Theosophical Society, as it then was, held its meetings. The audience which had gathered in this catacomb-like room in the Sulzbache Strasse to hear such extraordinary things, consisted of the small, sincere group of people who had collected around Michael Bauer, and a few Members from near and far who used to travel from town to town where Dr. Steiner was lecturing. Michael Bauer's group would not have been thought much of in academic circles, and although his lectures

 were of such a high spiritual standard, deeply fascinating and abounding in all the human qualities, very few from the society and educated circles of Nuremberg had been attracted by them.—Such, then, was the audience. Rudolf Steiner stood before us and

spoke of the boyhood of Jesus. From my seat in the front row I was able to watch every expression. He seemed to be looking away from and beyond the audience, gazing intently at pictures before him. With the greatest delicacy of touch and a most striking alertness and caution, he proceeded to describe these pictures. Occasionally there would be an interpolation of such phrases as: “I cannot say precisely if the sequence here is correct, but this is how it seems to me.’" Or: “With all my efforts I have not been able to discover the name of the place. The fact that the name has been obliterated must have some significance.” He spoke with a reverence in which there was no suggestion of servility, and stood there resolute and firm in the presence of the miraculous. An atmosphere of pure spirituality pervaded the room. It was an atmosphere purged of all feelings not born directly of the spirit —which was there in its power. He told how the divine revelations contained in the Old Testament had dawned in all their greatness upon the soul of the boy Jesus during the years immediately following His return to Nazareth after the event in the Temple at Jerusalem, how His sorrow grew more and more intense as He realised that any true understanding of the greatness of this former revelation of the Divine was lacking among His contemporaries, how this sorrow lived within Him, unexpressed and not understood by those in His environment—“a sorrow in itself far greater than all other sorrows I have known among mankind.”—But just because this sorrow was destined to dwell wholly in the inner being of the boy Jesus, He was able to ennoble it beyond all telling. . . .

This is not the place to repeat what Rudolf Steiner told us evening after evening out of the “Fifth Gospel”—the Gospel which has remained imperishable in that delicate spiritual record of all the past which even to-day can still 4

 be deciphered by one who is fully awake in the spirit. Indelible in my memory are the eyes into which we were able to look on those occasions, and how they were gazing into the past. His living spirituality radiated such purity, such convincing integrity and humility that one felt oneself in the presence of a supreme event in human history. Sometimes the eyes seemed to moisten quite gently from within, and to gleam with liquid gold. Suddenly it struck me that all my life I had been thinking: When I pass into the higher worlds after death I desire

nothing else during the first years than to be able for a long space of time to contemplate the life of Jesus with spiritual eyes.—Again and again I tried to be fully conscious of the unprecedented nature of the whole situation. Outside, electric trams were clanking by, one after the other, with shrill hootings. Within stood a man who claimed to have the past in pictures before him and spoke of them with natural assurance. —"Whoever are you?" I kept asking myself. Every test the human mind could make, provided it was an unprejudiced one, came out in favour of the miraculous. Healthy-mindedness? It could have no more convincing form than this. Any suggestion of mental abnormality—and as a clergyman I had a great many cases of this kind to deal with—would have been given the lie by the very atmosphere. Moral purity? We were living and breathing in it. Selflessness?—If one asked oneself: What must a

freely bestowed gift of the Gods be like?—it could not be different from this. But, then, what was it all? The beginning of human majesty as yet undreamed of? A message from a higher world sent at the right hour? Those born in after centuries will hardly be able to realise the feelings of those of us who had been living in materialism and witnessed events like this. Already to-day we see before us a growing generation who seem to find no difficulty in what seemed to us to be mighty hammer-blows against the world-edifice in which we were living. On this particular occasion I did not get beyond the point of realising inwardly: Even if it does not all prove to be true, it is, at any rate,

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 51 the most interesting story of Jesus I have ever heard and in spite of many incomprehensible points, honestly the most probable. I can only be grateful to have had the experience, for apart from the need of further thought, it is at all events full of living and healthy suggestions.----

Even if I succeeded to some extent in not being entirely bowled over by this overwhelming first impression, I did somewhat lose balance at what happened afterwards. Rudolf Steiner walked slowly away from the rostrum, came up to me and said: "I do not know what effect this has had upon you." There was a kindly questioning in his eyes. The pure humility with which he spoke was so unexpected after such extraordinary spiritual claims that I

could only reply clumsily, to the effect that I must first think it all over, or something of that kind. And yet at that moment I myself ought to have spoken a word or two as it were in the name of mankind. I was so ashamed that during the night I wrote a letter to Rudolf Steiner asking him to bear with me if, to begin with, I was not able to make up my mind about it all. But I had felt one thing very deeply : If he were right, we were being offered a precious gift, and special gratitude was due to him for the spirit in which he had given it.

Several times later on I asked Dr. Steiner if he would not continue these narrations from the Akashic Record. I was sure that it would be a most powerful impulse to mankind if the pictures of the life of Christ which arose in such wealth before his clear spiritual vision were placed by the side of the Gospels. During the War, Dr. Steiner's answer to me was that the “astral world,”—the whole spiritual atmosphere around the earth—was now too troubled for him to be able to make investigations of this kind. After the War he said that other work was more pressing for humanity at the moment. He saw the coming economic calamities, and began to expound his ideas of a world-economy. He saw the approach of sheer famine, and laid the basis for a new agricultural science. He saw the spiritual starvation caused by the scientific materialism of the day, and introduced his pupils to a new and spiritualised

 natural science. He saw the needs of youth and devoted himself to the development of a new art of education. He saw the helplessness of modern medicine, especially in the domain of internal and mental diseases, and gave the foundations of a spiritual-scientific therapy, full of new and splendid conceptions. He saw the confusion in the world of refigion and morality and helped those who sought his counsel to sure and effective religious activity.—And he went from us before we had received more than a few fragmentary pictures of the life of Christ which shone radiant and clear before the eyes of his spirit. But, after all, what had a generation of men deserved who received those first gifts of his with the great question they contained, in such a way that it was possible for a frightful caricature of him to appear in the illustrated papers with the inscription “The Fifth Evangelist I ” And not one of the

recognised leaders of religion was even willing to hear about or examine the gift this man had to give from the divine world.

Later on, Rudolf Steiner told me more as man to man about his investigations in the Akashic Record, and it was then that I first got to know of the searching tests he applied to his own faculties in order to make sure of his results. He said, for example, that by a strange fate he had never known of the events connected with the Resurrection from the Bible before his own investigations led him to them. As a boy he had been sent to school across the boundary of Austria and Hungary, and his father, a "Free Thinker," who was not interested in his son's religious instruction, allowed it to suffer thereby. And so he was able to make the experiments and ascertain in the first place by spiritual investigation what happened after the death of Christ. Then, when he read the Bible, he found that the Gospel records agreed in every detail with the pictures which had been revealed to him, except for the fact that on account of a lack of understanding, a vein of materialism has crept into the Gospels as they are to-day. He said that this vein of materialism is also apparent, for example, in the way in which Christ's words about the Second Coming are recorded.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 53 In many domains Rudolf Steiner had apparently carried on his researches for years, before he said a single word about them. Details which he could not find for a long time, were often missing. His research was in many instances a request addressed to the spiritual world and the request was not always answered.

These things, of course, are not narrated with the idea of proving anything. They are simply intended as the communication of facts which throw light on the spirit of this kind of research. It could never be in line with true spiritual research if, in the place of a dogmatically accepted New Testament, an equally dogmatically accepted Akashic Record were to arise which would primarily depend on the spiritual gifts of a single individual. Here, too, foresight has seen to it that with all the faculties at their disposal, men can freely test what is communicated from higher sources. The only thing that is expected of them is that they do not reject it out of prejudice, self-satisfaction, fear or convenience. To-day they still defend themselves with the primitive method of ignoring or denying what has been given.

Many things in this spiritual research may be left undecided for a long time, or forever—but others that help and enlighten will assuredly be found. Having listened to the opinions of Protestant theologians, orthodox and liberal, for twenty years, I could trust myself to judge whether or not the teachings of Rudolf Steiner—who did not come from any school—were to be taken seriously. ° It is the will of the spiritual world that in this age men shall be told more about these things. Time will show why."—Whenever I read the increasingly barren and inadequate descriptions given by theologians of the life of Jesus and compare them with Rudolf Steiner's, I perceive something of this "will of the spiritual world." But theology goes on its own way just the same, as if nothing had happened.—

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If I now tell of the effect which these new spiritual teach-

ings had in my whole life of soul, it is chiefly for the reason that an actual realisation of certain spiritual laws dawned within me myself. Sources of error became clear. The narration may, therefore, be the means of helping others in their turn. During those years I once dreamt that I asked Dr. Steiner: "Who were you in your previous incarnations?'* He answered: "Pythagoras and Menander.'*— When I woke up, the experience remained vividly with me. I asked myself if there could be any truth in it. Pythagoras —yes, that might be a possibility, although up to that moment the idea had never consciously occurred to me. But Menander—who was he? I looked in the encyclopædia and found two Menanders, one a poet and writer of comedies and the other a rhetorician. But they both lived so near to the time of Pythagoras that it was not easy to reconcile the suggestion with other anthroposophical views on the subject. Was it perhaps King Milinda who had the remarkable discourse with Buddha?—A few weeks later I was able to speak to Dr. Steiner and I told him about the dream experience. He first asked when it had happened and I told him almost exactly. "It has nothing to do with my incarnations,'' he said. "But that night I was deeply occupied with the study of Pythagoras and Menander, not only in a scientific sense.*' "Which Menander was it?" I asked, curious as to whether Dr. Steiner knew of the two of whose existence I had only learnt from the encyclopædia. "It was the rhetorician. I was working at a problem connected with speech, and

tried to get into contact with him.” Incidents like this give food for thought in many directions. To me the main significance was that I saw clearly how easily errors creep into spiritual experiences of this kind. For on the face of it, the actual spiritual impression was: Steiner, Pythagoras, Menander. But immediately the question about earlier incarnations cropped up. This came from a half-unconscious curiosity-complex within me. And yet it was through this complex that the experience became strong enough to be reflected by the consciousness. When I was thinking about the experience afterwards I could

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 55 clearly distinguish the different spiritual character of the two regions—that of interest mixed with curiosity and that of objective fact. And so I had the first basic standards for discriminating between true and false spiritual experiences. It was borne in upon me how right Dr. Steiner was when he indicated that nobody can receive reliable impressions from the world of spirit who has not passed the “Guardian of the Threshold,“ and has not learnt so completely to scrutinise his whole inner life that he can recognise the elements shooting in from the personal side of his being. Fundamentally speaking, the two “Guardians of the Threshold"—figures which seem so extraordinary to many people—are simply presentations, but at a very high spiritual level, of the Christian experiences of “Repentance" and “Faith."

Another incident may serve to indicate the language of this domain. Rudolf Steiner stood before me in a dream and said with emphasis: “Say A!" When I asked him about it afterwards, it appeared that he had been wanting me to learn to take delicate spiritual impressions more positively. “In such circumstances the sound A (ah) rings out in the spiritual world," he said by way of explanation. Nothing was known at that time of the anthroposophical teaching in regard to the sounds of speech. I had become aware of a reality but had not understood its language. How many important hints to be gleaned from true dreams are lost to us when we do not understand the language of the world to which they belong!—“But why did you look in the dream as if you were fair?" I asked. “You got that from your own fairness," was the answer. “Your forces were not quite strong enough to lead you on to the true perception." In little things and great things every answer seemed to be given with knowledge and assurance. Here spoke one

who was at home in these experiences. That was the impression one always had.

These examples may suffice. But while we are speaking of dreams which are more than dreams, one other experience shall be related, in view of subsequent events. Seven years before the founding of “The Christian Community," I saw

56 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE myself in a dream climbing a high mountain. I stopped for a moment in the ascent and saw, to the left, a settlement of people. It was the Johannes Müller Fellowship. The path had led me near by, but not actually into the settlement for it continued up the mountain side. I knew that I must go to the right and from a somewhat higher point in the ascent I looked down upon the settlement with sympathetic interest. At the summit of the mountain—I still see it there before me—stood a church with a steeple rising sheer to the heavens. The church had been built by Rudolf Steiner. The path was not easy and yet not too difficult. After a brief glance I set out calmly to make the ascent.—How remarkable that a dream like this should not only have reflected the reality of the moment, which in my waking consciousness I should never have expressed in such a form, but that a remote future of which one could have known nothing should also have shone into it I

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More than a year went by before I saw Dr. Steiner again. The Great War had begun, and everyone had his own immediate duties. The conversation I had with him early in the year 1915 at the Deutscher Hof, in Nuremberg, was particularly significant. Dr. Steiner began at once to speak of the War. “I have been glad to find that you have had the same idea of world-events as I have,” he said. “In what sense do you mean that?” I asked, rather hesitatingly. “I do not know what you have been saying about the War.” “No,” he said, “and I do not mean it like that. But you have a great inner sensitiveness to what is really going on.” The appreciation implicit in these words embarrassed me a little, and I went on: “Herr Doctor, I would be glad to know from you where you think that my activity now during the War is not on the right lines.” This was the first, rather explosive challenge on the subject of current affairs, to a knowledge that transcended ordinary

knowledge. For my work among my Nuremberg congregation was carried on far away from the local Anthroposophists—as they were now.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 57 after the final separation from the Theosophical Society— and it was highly improbable that Rudolf Steiner had heard anything at all about it. He took up the challenge at once. ° It is not a good thing to tell people that they ought not to hate England/* he said. “That only excites and does not help them. It is better to say : * You do not really hate England at all if you are true Germans.* When the German fights he never hates the person, he hates the cause” This was, as a matter of fact, the weak point in my work at that time. People were not at all satisfied with my lack of hatred. Naturally they expressed it quite differently, and said I had not enough living sympathy. But, as a matter of fact, I was not succeeding in giving them ideals great and worthy enough to take the place of all-too-human feelings.

This was the weak point among all the spiritual leaders in Germany during the War. They were not capable of inculcating spiritual substance into the life-struggle of the German people such as would have called forth the best and unconquerable German forces. Even Friedrich Naumann, whom we younger men held in such high esteem, failed in this fateful hour. This helped me to understand what Rudolf Steiner had been trying to do in the lectures he had given in Berlin during the early years of the War. In connection with the greatest figures of Germany’s spiritual history—Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel—he had tried to fill the hearts of men with a realisation of the spiritual worldmission of Germany. Those lectures richly deserve to be published by themselves. The effect they had on me personally was that they contained something which could have filled the hearts of the young in Germany with the inspiration for which they were longing, something which, without a single false note, could have inculcated moral stability and have kindled the greatness of spirit from which alone the true power of Germans can be born. Not a word needs to be taken back to-day. The noble inspiration kindled by the lectures, both the public ones and, to an even greater extent, those delivered to a more intimate group, was one of the fairest gifts of Rudolf Steiner. A wisdom-filed vision of

58 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE the real place of Germany among the nations and of the higher Will behind this, here became a pure and vital force, and wavering flickers of nationalism a holy flame, radiant with light but also with sacrifice. But Germans were listening to Chamberlain* and Traub and had no ears for Rudolf Steiner. One thinks wistfully what might not have happened if his ideas, transmitted to the nation in their dire conflict by a sufficient number of well-informed and deeply feeling interpreters, had been the basis of a true patriotic instruction.

I never heard Rudolf Steiner speak a single word about having been ignored. His love for German culture, cleareyed and born of the spirit, remained absolutely steadfast, without a trace of personal pique. But opponents have managed to spread abroad the statement that Rudolf Steiner was the man who was chiefly to be blamed for the loss of the battle of the Marne and defeat in the War. In passing through Coblenz, he had had a brief personal conversation as man to man with Von Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff. Von Moltke was not a member of the Anthroposophical Society, and had only heard an occasional lecture from Rudolf Steiner. That is all that ever happened. Military affairs were never once mentioned in the conversation. Which would have been the better leader for Germany: a spirit capable of making such accusations or the spirit speaking in Rudolf Steiner's lectures ?—About that posterity will have the last word to say.

Another subject of my conversation with Dr. Steiner that spring was his relation to the recognised science of the day. Very soon after I had met him, a feeling of responsibility had arisen in me.—"I at least will do what I can to see that Rudolf Steiner does not remain unknown to those who are entrusted to-day with the investigation of the various branches of science." Life had brought me into touch with many University Professors. I thought about them all, and hit upon Oswald Külpe, with whom I had a close tie of friendship. Those who were acquainted with Oswald Külpe know that in the whole of Germany at that time it would have been

•The German philosopher and essayist.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 59 hard to find a Professor more deeply schooled in philosophy and psychology, or a man of greater candour, purity of character and freedom from prejudice. The humane nobility of

Külpe was something that remained as an unforgettable, almost sacred experience in all those who came into close contact with him. Once before I had asked Rudolf Steiner if he would ever be willing to go with me to see Külpe and allow himself to be questioned by him, if I undertook to arrange the meeting. I was not thinking of any kind of psychological experiment in the ordinary sense. My idea was rather to try to bring one of the most unbiased men in modern science face to face with Rudolf Steiner's extraordinary faculties and get him quite freely to discuss methods whereby science might be convinced on her own lines, without giving up her ground —but also without unfairness to the unusual character of the phenomena. I was imbued with the feeling: Rudolf Steiner must not die without this one attempt having been made; if modern science could come to terms with newly emerging human faculties, this must surely be of immeasurable importance for the whole of mankind. Rudolf Steiner, on his side, raised no difficulty. He only said: "I warn you beforehand that the thing is very complicated. The thought of a devotional man, for instance, appears blue, but that of a banker given up to his money also blue." "In what does the difference consist, then?" I asked him. "In the whole configuration." These words show that in a certain sense Rudolf Steiner was even ready to submit to an experiment. Only it was not to turn into an occasion where some scientist put him through an "examination" in an institute, treating him for all the world as if he were a criminal to be unmasked. Far rather must it be an occasion for a man with an open mind on the matter to put his questions and try to come to an understanding as to how scientific research could find an approach to the phenomena.

In Nuremberg at that time Dr. Steiner told me definitely that he was willing to go with me to Külpe. He said: "At your request I have looked again at his Introduction to

Philosophy, and I hardly think that with his realism he will be really open to receive these things. The aura is too colourless. But I will communicate with you when I am next in Munich, and then we will make the attempt." Thereupon I went to see Külpe, who was then Professor of Philosophy in the Munich University, told him of my personal experiences with Rudolf Steiner, gave him the most essential books, and asked him to look into the matter in the interests of science and Anthroposophy. He replied in a kindly

way: “If I had not heard all this personally from you, I would not have bothered with it. But now I will have a look at the books.” About six months afterwards came a letter from Rudolf Steiner saying that he was in Munich and ready for the interview. But when I tried to fix a day and time with Külpe, he wrote to excuse himself. The books had made him realise that a superficial study would achieve nothing. One would have to go into the subject fundamentally. But that would mean breaking into other tasks, and the books had not given him the impression of being significant enough to warrant this. It therefore seemed to him that the probability of anything coming of the interview was too remote.—So there was no other course than for me to put Dr. Steiner off. It was the only attempt which I thought might have had a chance of success. But it was not Rudolf Steiner who drew back, in this case.

It is a strange chapter, this behaviour on the part of orthodox science. Thick volumes were being written on the Mystics of the past; people were journeying to India in search of Yogis in order to converse with them. But they did not see that in the very heart of European civilisation there was something far greater, something that would have given them the most living understanding of the Mystics of the past and the Yogis in far-off India. Eyes were being strained down microscopes and telescopes; every beetle and every comet examined. But scientists did not trouble about the rarest phenomenon of all and yet so near to hand, in the shape of one who could have shed such many-sided light on what is more significant than anything else—the nature and

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 61 being of man. Never once in Rudolf Steiner’s life, so far as I know, did it happen that a recognised scientist went to him saying: You write such remarkable things. May I ask you about them?—Nothing that he wrote was taken seriously. Men would not let themselves be attracted by his other work nor be compromised by contact with something unfamiliar and unrecognised. At most they expected Rudolf Steiner to come forward on his own account and ask for investigation and recognition. But the request for the former was clearly enough stated in his books. When that had no effect, every other step would have been beneath him.

So all that was left to science was to concern itself with old-fashioned seeresses or automatic painters. But all such phenomena only lead into the dim, unconscious regions of the life of soul, and in any case the right methods of investigations are not there. With Rudolf Steiner there was simply no question of trance. One looked there into a superconsciousness, not into a dark, dreamy subconsciousness. It was a difference as between the uncanny flashing of rockets by night and the bright sunlight of day.

For the rest, let me say here that I myself seemed to observe indications of a certain development on the part of Rudolf Steiner himself. In earlier years it seemed to me that when he was giving advice to people he liked to sit where he would not be obliged to look against the light. When he began to use his faculties of spiritual sight one noticed a certain deliberate adjustment of his being, often accompanied by a lowering of the eyes. One remembered then what he says in his books, namely, that the physical body of a man must be wiped out before the "higher men-bers can be perceived. As the years went on I noticed this less and less, and finally not at all. He seemed to pass without effort into the higher state of consciousness; or rather it was as if both states of consciousness, that of sense perception and of spiritual perception, were there for him freely and naturally, one beside the other. In the same way, on several occasions in earlier years I thought I often noticed that at the beginning of a conversation it was not easy for

him to find the right words. One said to oneself then that he had surely been occupied with his spiritual investigations and needed a few seconds for the transition to the world of purely physical existence. He tried to find the appropriate word, missed it, and stopped. A brief effort— and the difficulty was overcome. This, too, I noticed less and less frequently as time went on. In the early years there were sometimes moments in a lecture when one would have the impression—now he is occupied with some intervening spiritual observation. At such moments he would speak hesitatingly, letting the sentence slowly finish itself, and sometimes even padding it. Later on, one often saw from his very look—which could change with bewildering rapidity as the result of mighty spiritual impulses—that extraordinary things were going on within him, far more extraordinary than were actually said. And yet the two aspects did not seem separate but rather to be livingly united. When I thought about the development which Rudolf Steiner

himself manifested—in so far as I was able to perceive it—it seemed to me amazingly rapid, and to put the others of us to shame.—It is not fair to the world to withhold these observations. But I myself would not like them to be regarded as authoritative unless they are compared with those made by others as well.

The unexpected and premature death of Külpe occurred soon after this episode. In an intimate conversation Rudolf Steiner told me that he had never yet seen anyone who tried so hard after his death to get away from his old way of thinking. Külpe's refusal to meet him had in no way prevented him from taking a kindly interest in the fate of this man in the other world.

A third conversation, which took place early in the year 1915, shall here be mentioned. In my meditations upon the words of Christ I had become aware that these words had a strong effect on the body. It was as though they were saying: If we are to live within your being, we must first transform it.—One grew conscious of the delicate, spiritual corporeality lying behind the physical body as its spiritual

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 63 architect. Changes in this finer body could be perceived. Meditation upon the words of Christ could intensify into potent bodily sensations, even into acute physical pain. The aftermath was a consciousness of a wonderful healing which, for the first time, gave one an inkling of what true health of the whole being really is. These experiences led me to wonder whether meditation upon the words of Christ might not be able to tell one something about His actual appearance. At certain points of one's own bodily form, one would then have to observe wherein Christ must have been different from oneself. The words of Christ revealed more or less distinctly how the body must look in which these words could really live. I am convinced too that the words of other great men among humanity could be so strongly meditated upon that similar experiences, even if less vivid, might well arise.

Without saying anything in detail about these observations, I asked Rudolf Steiner: "Is it really possible, simply by meditation upon the words of Christ, to come to the point of being able to say anything at all about His actual appearance?" "And what do you think He looked like?" came the quiet counter-question. When I began to say certain things, Rudolf Steiner

took up my description and led it—I can only say—to clarity. It was the same picture which he afterwards gave in his lectures: A brow unlike that of a modern thinker, but one upon which reverence for the deep mysteries of existence was written; eyes that did not gaze upon men as though in observation but penetrated their very being in the fire of self-sacrifice; a mouth—"When I saw it for the first time I had this impression: this mouth has never taken food, but has been proclaiming divine truths from all eternity." In astonishment I asked: "Yes, but if you know what Christ was really like, is it not right to make this picture of Him in some way accessible to mankind ? " "Yes, indeed," was his answer. "And that is why I have told an artist in Dornach to make a model of Christ according to my indications."

At that moment I made up my mind that my next free

 time would be spent in Dornach in order to let this model of Christ work upon me from nearer at hand. I did not yet think of joining the Anthroposophical Society. Rudolf Steiner never gave me the least hint in this direction. He invariably gave me the unlimited freedom of a guest. But he knew, too, that I was not being held back by trivial motives.

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At Midsummer, in the year 1915, with the thunder of the cannons rumbling from neighbouring Alsace, and the searchlights playing over the countryside by night, I sat before the image of the Christ in Dornach. At that time there was only a half-figure in plasticine modelled by Rudolf Steiner himself. He had told the artist working there to allow me access to the studio at any time, and let me sit quietly in front of the model. I availed myself of this permission to the extent to which I thought it would not disturb the artist's work. And so I was able to steep myself in the Gospels with this Christ figure in front of me. Now I compared the model with the Gospels and now the Gospels with the model. There were also opportunities of speaking to Rudolf Steiner about the figure. "But I do not consider the type at all Semitic, Herr Doctor," I said to him. "Well, the part around the mouth and chin is Semitic. The upper part of the head is Aryan," was his answer. "Then Chamberlain and others are right when they say that there are Aryan elements in Christ?"—"Certainly. Both elements are there." What Dr. Steiner had said in lectures, namely, that in a far remote past two streams of peoples went out, one of which is found in the more Aryan peoples who were destined to seek for the revelation of the Divine mainly in the outer world, and the other in the more southerly, Semitic peoples who were wont to seek the Divine in the world of inner being, until finally both streams united in Christianity—all this was impressively reflected in the head of this statue. "For a long time now I have been studying this model," I said, "and I can well imagine that this was how the Christ of the Gospels appeared. But there is something

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 65 I miss: the element of loving kindness." "There you are quite right," Dr. Steiner answered. "I tried to catch His expression at the moment of the Temptation. But one cannot get a statue to portray the element of loving kindness, because the eyes are not there. That is why I have tried to express it in the gesture of the raised left hand. If it is successful, it should help to make people understand that, under the influence of this loving kindness, Lucifer hurls himself voluntarily into the depths." And then Dr. Steiner went on to speak of the efforts it had cost him to come to the decision that even the Christ of

Michelangelo had something Luciferian about it and that a new presentation of Christ must be ventured upon, more nearly corresponding to the reality revealed by the spirit.

A grotesque happening may reveal Rudolf Steiner from another side. One day in Dörnach I was visited by a shrewd Swiss theologian who also took an interest in Anthroposophy and had a wish to talk to Rudolf Steiner. "He can come with you to the studio and I will also show him the model." When Rudolf Steiner had received us and had taken off the wrapping from the mould, the new guest, after a moment of silence, broke into speech: "I see a resemblance to the German Crown Prince," he said affably. Heavens above! I thought to myself. How will Dr. Steiner take that? With an unconcern and forbearance that touched one's very heart, he said: "Oh really! You think so? Where do you see the resemblance?" In quite a calm and friendly way the conversation went on to its natural conclusion. At such moments, when it seemed that further conversation would serve no purpose, Rudolf Steiner could assume something like a cowl. Outwardly, his kindly presence was there, but his real being was living in hidden places into which one could not enter. The theologian certainly thought that with his comparison he was saying something that would please Germans. I never spoke to Dr. Steiner about what had happened. But he, on his part, never asked me again about that man.

It was wonderful to be able to contemplate the Christ 5

thus objectively and spiritually in the company of Rudolf Steiner. A certain strangeness which, to begin with, I myself felt in connection with the Christ statue, had to be overcome. But then one began to realise more and more clearly that it was simply impossible to have any different conception of the Christ. In its sublime purity this form was far and away superior to all others. Suddenly it struck me that I had often wished: If only I knew how Christ really looked! That would surely make the impression of His words stronger. Why is this denied us?—Another wish which the angels heard. When I thought about how I had struggled with the words of Christ, the experience in Dornach seemed to me a wonderful and veritably divine reward for much quiet effort. And when I thought of the present age:—Is it of no significance that this Christ figure has come precisely at this time?

Was there not in my own wish for a Christ image something of the yearning of a generation which loves and has particular gifts for understanding the visible world—a generation which is seeking and reaching out for full and complete manhood? Was there not in the Dornach experience a kind of consummation of the longings of an age wherein men are seeking the spirit, and can now understand the spirit in a new way in spite of their material existence? Was there not here an element of the promise: I will come again and abide with you? Before that bust of Christ in Dornach my own yearlong searchings met the help which Anthroposophy was able to offer.

The talks I had with Dr. Steiner in Dornach at that time naturally bore upon quite other matters as well—above all, for example, upon the World War. "Can one really know how the War is going to end?° I asked. "Certainly it would be possible," was his reply. "But then one would have to retire from all participation in events. It would not do to investigate these things by occult means and then allow the knowledge so gained to colour one's own actions." With the care with which he always did such things he drew a map on paper. Belgium and the North coast of France

 were marked out as areas under English influence, also the Eastern part of the Mediterranean and the Bosphorus. "They say now that they are fighting for Russia, but that, of course, is illusion." Germany was cut down in the East and deprived of Alsace-Lothringen in the West. It was more or less the map of Europe as it actually became after the War, except that Germany and German-Austria were joined. "I can prove that this map was in existence in England in the early 'nineties. It may be older still, but I have not gone into that yet. This is what is to happen if things turn out as Germany's enemies wish." Nevertheless, my impression was that at that time Rudolf Steiner was anticipating a more favourable conclusion of the War for Germany. When the War was over he once said to me: "Things need not have turned out as they have. But—what has come to pass was, after all, inevitable." Six months after our conversation in Dornach, about the month of March, 1916, I asked Dr. Steiner about the many prophecies that were going round. The laundress of a General in Munich had again foretold peace in the month of May. "Yes, these people do see something," he said. "Spiritual conditions are such that peace is really possible during the next few months. But they

do not see all the opposing influences that are at work. That is why their prophecies do not come true."

The conversations in Dornach were also concerned with many quite personal matters. Once again Rudolf Steiner told me something amazingly correct about myself. "It is really wonderful that you can see this!" broke from me. The words were spoken in the impulse of the moment, but at the same time I was quite conscious of wanting to see how he would react to such a remark. "Wonderful?" he said, with kindly and yet unmistakable repudiation. "You should not think of it like that. One may or may not see such things. But—that I know what Christianity needs to-day —yes, that is Grace." The whole impulse of soul contained in these words came out so simply, so freely and with such natural assurance that I can imagine nothing more

beautiful. Scenes like this will help people to feel how one was constantly being carried off one's feet by Rudolf Steiner's extraordinary faculties, and how his human simplicity would again and again bring one to earth again. There may well have been an inner connection between these remarks and the fact that he said in the course of the same conversation: "When one looks more deeply into one's inner being, one discovers things of which one does not like to speak." The tone in which he said especially the last few words would alone turn anyone who heard it into a righteous and humble man. Not a trace of sentimentality nor secret self-complacency. "A man in the presence of God"—might well have been said. Here was a man gazing at his own being in the clear light of consciousness, without losing his sense of self. Such a scene embodies everything that has made Protestantism great: self-knowledge and the experience of Grace.—But these things were only the basic tenor, giving rise to a mighty life of full revelation. It was not because I sat before him as a Protestant theologian that Rudolf Steiner said things to please me. In the very depths of his consciousness he felt his mission to be the service of Christendom and a prerogative of Grace. But with his deep humility he never said this more often than was absolutely necessary.

"Did you always think of Christ as you think to-day, even in your scientific days?" I asked him. "I remember that in a conversation in the middle of my

twenties I spoke of Christ like this," he answered. "But then of course it fell temporarily into the background. I had to pass through all those other phases. It was a karmic necessity." "Why was it that in spite of all you must have known even in those early years, you were so completely silent about occult matters until your fortieth year?" I asked. "I had to make a certain position for myself in the world first. People may say nowadays that my writings are mad, but my earlier work is also there, and they cannot wholly ignore it. And, moreover, I had to bring things to a certain clarity in myself, to a point where I could give them form, before it

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 69 was possible to talk about them. That was not so very easy. And then—I admit it frankly—it needs courage to speak openly about such things. I had first to acquire this courage."

"Do you really think that Anthroposophy will succeed in becoming more than a strong impulse in our civilisation? Do you think it can really strike through as new culture?" —He became amazingly serious. "If humanity does not accept what is now being offered, it will have to wait for another hundred years," he said. He seemed to be deeply moved. It was not merely emotion, but something like the thunder of the Judgment. He said no more. Never before or since have I seen how the soul of a whole age can tremble in one man.—

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At the turn of the year 1915-1916 came the enquiry from Berlin as to whether I would be willing to let myself be nominated to the "Neue Kirche." But—was I not being called there under false suppositions? I wrote: "I am not the man you think. Of recent years I have been in close contact with the Anthroposophical Movement; and although I should not propose to preach unadulterated Anthroposophy, but Christianity, as the sermons sent herewith will show, I should have to reserve full freedom to declare myself openly on the side of Anthroposophy, for instance, freedom to become a member of the Anthroposophical Society. I, at any rate, am convinced that in the age now dawning it would be a very good thing if a minister thinking along anthroposophical lines were to have a pulpit in Berlin. But as you will probably think otherwise, I must state the position

frankly.”—The answer was: “Come as you are.” I think it important to emphasise this. Later on, when people often said to me that they approved of the earlier Dr. Rittelmeyer but not of the later, they did not know that since the year 1912 they had been unconsciously partaking of Anthroposophy. Not so much in the detailed utterances as in the inner assurance with which the higher

 world was spoken of, in the increased power coining from an inner source of help, in the new relation to Christ— Anthroposophy was there.

For the first time now I was actually faced with the question as to whether I ought to join the Anthroposophical Society. For one thing was certain: if I did not join now, but later, my membership would look very much like "conversion,” perhaps even a breach of faith to selectors and congregation. If joining had involved any dogmatic adherence to a single one of the results of spiritual science, it would have been an impossible step for me to take. I had already fought strenuously enough for my freedom against dogmatism in the Church. But, as later on the new constitution of the Anthroposophical Society at Christmas, 1923, clearly showed, membership simply implied that one acknowledged the right of existence and the importance of spiritual scientific research, and was uniting oneself with those who wished to pursue this along the lines indicated by Rudolf Steiner. One was not asked to avow the truths of spiritual science but simply to take them seriously and work them out for oneself. An act in acknowledgment of Rudolf Steiner himself, however, seemed to me pure duty to truth and decency, in view of the misunderstanding and calumny which were his lot.

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There was now a specific inducement to put my whole relation to Anthroposophy to the test and bring this test to a definite conclusion.

How can one really discover whether a body of new spiritual teaching like this, with all its claims, is actually based on truth—or whether it is all a colossal error?—That was the question. I personally felt that the natural thing to do was to form as accurate a judgment as possible of the man who was bringing the teaching. I did not let a single opportunity for judging

Rudolf Steiner as a man slip by. It had been my privilege in life to come into contact with many outstanding personalities and, as a clergyman, with

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 71 the destinies and characters of very many human beings. A good foundation for judging the worth of a man was therefore present.

It appeared to me highly probable that if there were a tendency to fantasy and self-deception in a man in regard to the domain of the supersensible, this must inevitably show itself at some point or other in ordinary intercourse and in contact with the affairs of practical life. Otherwise one would have to assume the existence either of a rare and improbable duality, in a form not found even in the most subtle cases of mental disease, or of diabolical roguery. How great was my astonishment when I saw more and more evidence of the certainty and clarity with which Rudolf Steiner perceived and was master of the most trivial details of life. His knowledge of human nature was simply amazing. So far as my experience goes, the only sense in which he might have been deceived, was that he hoped more of many people than they afterwards fulfilled. Dr. Steiner addressed himself to the best in other men, and the response too often came from what was less worthy in them. He had mighty tasks to distribute, but not the men to whom he could entrust them. So he chose the best he could find, hoped the best of them and then was probably only able to feel very moderately satisfied. But that was not mistaken judgment on the part of Rudolf Steiner; it was failure on the part of others.

Of one thing I was also convinced: If there is a trace of inner self-aggrandisement and will-to-power in a man, it cannot remain permanently hidden in the course of ordinary conversation. I had so often been disillusioned when an outstanding man let vanity suddenly peep out through some hole in his prophet's mantle, and had suddenly faced an abyss at a word or a hint or a tone which slipped out in regard to himself. Never once did I experience the least trace of this in Rudolf Steiner. One knows, of course, that in saying this to-day one only runs the risk of being accused of "sickly eulogism" or of blindness. Nevertheless, it is true that new ideas and conceptions of all

the human virtues arose when one actually saw Rudolf Steiner. For he never "showed off," not even in the most personal and intimate conversation. On the contrary, he concealed himself where one might well have marvelled at him, and seemed to wish others to find out what he was for themselves.

A new conception of truth grew up when one saw the careful precision with which he answered, with deliberation in every word and tone, but without a trace of "diplomacy/* with good-will to insignificant people who could not have risen to anything greater, but also without patronising "kindness.** I never knew an instance where regard for outer benefit kept him from stating the bald truth, and doing something that might have been unpleasant. Men who were playing a part in the affairs of the world and could have been useful to him waited in vain for him to approach them or place himself beside them in the limelight. When I once saw with regret that he let a man who could have been valuable to the cause be snubbed, he said curtly and emphatically: "I do not want to win over any man.'*

Admiration from women spoils nearly every popular speaker. It gives rise to false undertones in speech, and false nuances in the estimation of one's own powers. Rudolf Steiner's attitude to his admirers was worthy of the very greatest respect. It was purity itself. He did not put an end to the admiration, for he knew that reverence is the mother-soil of much that is noble. He was also entirely free from hardness, but if he became aware of it he would not, from his side, suffer the faintest undertone of sickly emotion. As far as he was concerned, he managed to have people around him who honoured but did not rave about him.

And so I could go on, for a great many pages. But some do not need it and others will not stand it. At this point it is enough to say that the impression of Rudolf Steiner as a man was that confidence in his cause could only grow greater the more one got to know him. In many respects he was foreign to me, a man of quite a different order.

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 73 But for that very reason I felt free of him and sure of my judgment.

Apart from the personality of Rudolf Steiner and confidence in it, one tried to be clear about Anthroposophy by putting oneself into line with Dr.

Steiner's clairvoyant faculties in personal cases. It may not have been altogether easy to combine the tact that is due to another, possibly very great man, with a justified desire for knowledge and an unweakened scientific sense. Rudolf Steiner never seemed to dislike my attitude and never once, either directly or indirectly, repelled or corrected it. Obviously it is quite impossible to tell everything, but this much may be said. All doubt as to the truth of his higher faculties was banished more and more by what I experienced as the years went by. This, of course, is not proof of categorical accuracy, nor does it dispense with the necessity for testing every new piece of knowledge, but it does indicate that one's relation to the truths of spiritual science is not as it was at the stage when one was asking the first elementary questions. My slowly increasing faith in his clairvoyant faculties was never shaken by so much as a single unimportant incident.

A further struggle with Anthroposophy—and indeed the greatest—consisted in an attempt to get results myself by its methods. The Anthroposophical Movement is continually subject to the reproach: "There is only one man among you who sees all these things.''—At least that is what is said by people who have got beyond the primitive objection that it is nothing but re-hashed Gnosticism. "Show us a number of clairvoyants who agree with each other. Then we shall have something more to say!'' I can only take this kind of talk to be another attempt to avoid real investigation. Of course there is only one man who saw all these things. And among those I know, there is nobody whose faculties of vision could be compared for a moment with Rudolf Steiner's. But, after all, is it so unusual and incredible in world-history that one man should be so far ahead of everyone else? Was there not an Aristotle, a St. Augustine, a Goethe? A great man cannot be rejected just because he

stands alone. The fact that no one claims to have seen what Rudolf Steiner saw is an actual proof of how little suggestion played a part in Anthroposophy. It is the case, however, that there are many Anthroposophists who know from actual experience the first elements of things of which Rudolf Steiner speaks, and I myself was now one of their number. The faint beginnings of individual knowledge were there in regard to nearly every domain of which he spoke. But every step forward in one's own knowledge makes for freedom. From the freedom I myself had already

acquired, I could observe Rudolf Steiner. But who was there who could tell me what happens at the later stages of what I knew myself in its rudiments: the higher members of man's being, Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition, heavenly Hierarchies? Certainly science could not. It had not the slightest inkling of such things. Indian teachings came either through the philologists, who had no experience in this domain, or through the theosophists, who gave them out in a form too remote from present-day consciousness. —And so there was only Rudolf Steiner. Every one of his utterances could be related to the beginnings of knowledge in oneself and tested by them.

Another effort in connection with Anthroposophy was that I tried to discover its effects in actual life. In a purely hypothetical way I tried to live under the assumption that it might be right. In this way one entered into the realm of living spirit instead of lingering in abstraction. After all, one did not need to assimilate anything that did not suit one, or rather one need only do so in the way that seemed fitting for oneself. But then the health-giving effect of Anthroposophy was quite unmistakable. For the first time one had the impression that here was the true relation between Spirit and Nature. One became "healthy" in the real sense, realising for the first time the utter poverty of the unspiritual materialism which has even laid hold of Christianity. And one became really "man." For man can only truly live if he feels himself a citizen of two worlds. When he has a great "over-world" above him—a world of which he can

 become a member with his own particular tasks—then and only then does he become fully conscious of the dignity of manhood.

A final effort in connection with Anthroposophy consisted in testing it at the tribunal of actuality and of thought, of all the knowledge and intellect otherwise at one's disposal, comparing Anthroposophy with other knowable reality and other knowable reality with Anthroposophy. And then it often appeared that, to begin with, one had taken Anthroposophy in far too abstract or too crude a sense, or that one was living in the world of reality full of prejudices. It is not our intention here to speak in detail of all the paths which had to be trodden. Am I going too far if I declare that not a

single one of the opponents took a tenth of the pains I took with Anthroposophy before I joined the Movement? Real investigation on the part of opponents—such as it is—is shamefully amateurish, full of prejudices and fears. People always seem to imagine that they must accept what a clairvoyant says, without putting it to the test. Those who do not entirely rid themselves of this superstition will not even be able to come near it.—To accept nothing, but also to reject nothing that has not been put to the test, to let things rest, whatever their measure of probability, to admit free hypotheses in regard to realms about which others have nothing whatever to say and then to wait quietly for what will emerge from life and thought—if people could bring themselves to adopt this attitude, the possibility of ultimate clarity would be there. And the battle of Anthroposophy would, I believe, be won.

At all events it was then that I saw for the first time what a ° conception of the world" really means. Surely nobody in their senses would take the blind naturalism of Ernst Haeckel, or the anæmic spirituality of Rudolf Eucken, to be a "conception of the world?" Even in the æsthetic sense, the vast world-picture embracing the realms of spirit and matter which is presented by Anthroposophy, is staggering. A man who knows something of the spiritual history of humanity will have to ask himself: Where and when has

 mankind ever experienced anything like this? Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas—but here there was something more, something really like a sublimated union of both. The purity of spirit, the manifold confirmations in actual life, the illuminating explanation of hundreds of details, the magnificent interplay of the parts, the healthy way in which a place was assigned to the world of nature and its innate connection with the world of spirit, the living fullness of the spirit as creator of the natural world—when one considered all this and put it to the test of life, here indeed was a conception of the world with which one could really live! My own desire was to hold to what I knew of Christ in my inner being and to regard everything else as secondary. But my Christianity could live and breathe in this conception of the world, even if I still accepted it as a mere hypothesis. Indeed it increased in clarity and power.—

That was more or less my frame of mind when I faced the question as to whether I ought to become a member of the Anthroposophical Society.

Up to that time nobody had said a word to me on the subject, least of all Dr. Steiner. Michael Bauer had simply told me at the beginning that I could take part in everything without attaching myself to the Society. I now began myself to speak to Rudolf Steiner about it. I said that for my part I was now ready to join the Society; I would only refrain if he preferred to have men outside the Society who were its supporters. He replied: “It is immaterial whether you come in or stay outside; you will be attacked in either case.“ That was all that I ever said to him about the matter. It is a grievous tragedy in human history that a man in whose proximity one breathed the air of a freedom yet to come should live in the minds of the majority of his contemporaries as a perpetrator of sedition, a wizard with hypnotic powers, a kind of semi-magic, semi-mystic Pied Piper. Certainly, many among his adherents felt their own inner self-assurance shaken by the overwhelming superiority of Rudolf Steiner’s powers. There was also far too much easy chattering about anthroposophical truths and a great

Photograph: Lendvai Dircksen, Berlin

Friedrich Rittelmeyer 1872—193^

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 77 deal of blind following of the leader of Anthroposophy. Such is the tragedy that is bound up with greatness, a tragedy that will always be there when a great man appears. But Rudolf Steiner never failed to let it be known that the men he liked best were those who stood before him in freedom and self-assurance. Even wilfulness did not altogether displease him, although he could not regard it as a quality likely to promote the cause of Anthroposophy. The way in which he combined the pressing need of the cause with respect for personal freedom always called forth my unqualified admiration. If it were a matter of choosing, he invariably put the freedom of a man before the needs of the cause. For he regarded the future temple of mankind as lost if it were built upon mediæval foundations.

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In the middle of the year 1916 I gave my first—still provisional—sermon in Berlin. When I visited Dr. Steiner the next day I heard, to my astonishment, that he had been present. He spoke very kindly. “Of course I always do see something particular in cases like this. The organ music at the beginning—there was nothing in that. When you began to speak the people were all scattered individualities, but during the sermon everything drew together, and at the end there was one uniform ether-form. It was really beautiful, and I am glad to have seen it. I shall often come and see what the further development will be.” His words contained a joy of participation which opened out a pleasant prospect in regard to my work in Berlin. But Dr. Steiner could not, after all, carry out his intention of coming. Very soon afterwards his efforts to bring about a spiritual solution of the world-crisis made superhuman claims on his time and energy. And so I only saw him twice, at funeral services which, at his suggestion I held for members of the Anthroposophical Society. On each occasion I questioned him afterwards, because I was wondering about this “ether-form.“ In both cases my own impression had been that it was not possible to produce

78 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE much inner effect upon the crowd of strange, personally indifferent participants. Something could be done by words in praise of the dead in these funeral “orations’* but not by

the actual truths of religion. Dr. Steiner said in the first case: “A few isolated ether-forms arose among the congregation, but nothing more than that.” The second time he said: “You established*a good contact with the actual mourners.”

Apart from this I hardly had a word with Dr. Steiner about my calling in the Ministry. I wanted to forge my own path quite candidly and to let the anthroposophical impulses work freely. From the beginning of my work as a young theologian I had always been inwardly sure that any day might lead me out of the evangelical Ministry and I kept the resolve to be ready when that moment came, alive and alert in my consciousness. But on his side, Dr. Steiner never took advantage of this for the purpose of exercising influence, not even by indirect suggestion, against which my urge for freedom would have strongly reacted. It seemed to me that he supported me in my methods. I was often able to take what he said in the sense of encouragement, for instance, when he spoke of the “substance” or “good results of meditation’* in the preaching. On one occasion—it must have been about the year 1917—when I met him on the way to his lecture and accompanied him for a few steps, he said: “In my life-mission I must confine myself to the occult—otherwise I shall not succeed. Your task is religion.” This too I took as an encouragement to continue on my path. But to-day as I look back, I realise that there again was a moment when I ought to have asked further.

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The first private lecture I heard from Dr. Steiner after I had moved to Berlin, was on the subject of Christ. The impression it made was one of the most vivid experiences of my life. Rudolf Steiner stood on the rostrum in the small, beautifully decorated premises of the Anthroposophical Society in the Gaisbergstrasse and spoke.—I realised then

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 79 how a man in the very Presence of Christ speaks of Christ. There was something more than devotional reverence in the words. In freedom and reverence a man was looking up to Christ Whose Presence was quite near, and in that Presence his being changed of itself into an embodiment of noble prayer. The lecture had nothing of the style of a sermon or a prayer. It was a spiritual-scientific communication of facts of a higher world as they had revealed themselves

to research, and could then be applied with perfect freedom. Mightier still was the impression of how the Real Presence itself leads man into the mood of adoration which for the first time gives him his true dignity. Not a priest nor a prophet, but a knower of reality stood there before us and let us gaze at this reality in and through him. Only a warped nature could fail to perceive that here one was standing in the very fight of truth. The man before us was telling of a world in which he himself was living. The many hundreds of sermons I had heard about Christ came up in the background of my mind. They faded into shadows. “We speak of that which we do know and testify of that which we have seen.”—A new proclamation of Christ was there. A new Christ-era was dawning —as yet in the first faint rays of the promised morning. The lecture itself spoke of this—spoke without the least trace of selfish longing for what has yet to come, proclaiming simply what is and would like to bestow itself upon us. Anyone who witnessed this could doubt no longer but that a fully authorised servant of Christ was standing before him.

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There now followed two winter seasons—1916-1917 and 1917-1918—when each week I was able to hear a lecture from Dr. Steiner, and sometimes two, three and four. Apart from this it was possible to go to him with questions from time to time, although consideration for him and for others demanded that one should not make selfish use of such opportunities. But after nearly every lecture I was able to talk to him for a short time in the Group room of the

Anthroposophical Society. After he had satisfied other questioners and had finished conversations, he would usually come and stand or sit down for a time, chatting in a friendly, human way in the now emptied room. It was in these hours that the most direct idea of his personality grew up. He listened to everything with the greatest human interest, and was communicative himself in the most human way.

But to me these hours had at times something dispiriting about them. Now and then one felt so clearly that Dr. Steiner would have liked to say

something more about the content of his lecture. Sometimes, indeed, he would begin to do so. But a quick and intelligent response to these remarks was often lacking. One feared that an unintelligent word might pain him more than silence. It did not seem possible to orientate oneself quickly and surely enough in the new world of thought. And so not unfrequently these attempts at conversation proved painfully meagre. One sensed the tragic loneliness of a great man—and yet could not help him. Dr. Steiner never showed any sign of disappointment, and bore such clumsiness with kindly patience. One can well imagine what effect his kindness had when one was conscious of these feelings of shame. On one occasion, when he had announced that during the next few months he would not be able to give private interviews, he came up directly after the lecture and said: “What I have just said does not apply to intimate friends.” This put me to such shame that I might have given the impression of not having heard. And then he repeated the words with a slight emphasis, looking at me attentively until I was able to indicate that I had understood.

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Certain episodes of more general interest shall now be narrated from those years, in their more objective framework.

The attention of the public was not as yet directed to Dr. Steiner. He had written works of the greatest significance, and they were read in circles far wider than that of the Anthroposophical Society. But not a single man whose

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 81 word would have had weight with the public had said a syllable about them. His work seemed to be condemned to death by silence. Christian Morgenstern, who, as a poet, frankly and emphatically avowed his adherence to Rudolf Steiner, was still but little known and he, moreover, enjoyed a poet's freedom in not being taken seriously enough in the domain of philosophy. As a matter of fact Dr. Steiner had deliberately avoided all the business of publishers' advertisements. No review copies were issued, no reviews set on foot, no lists published. He took the chance of a work being recognised in the world on its own merits. The pure sincerity of his knowledge that his duty was to the spirit and the spirit alone, is exactly the reverse of the touting methods of which his opponents accuse him. Whatever faults were made by his friends during the days when the Threefold Commonwealth idea was being mooted—and the pressing need of the times explains a great deal here—Rudolf Steiner himself was blameless. As one who had direct experience, I can say that nobody could possibly have trusted more courageously and resolutely in the spirit than he. Evidence to the contrary has yet to be brought forward—if indeed it was ever there !

In this state of affairs it was clear to me that one had to raise one's voice if there was any hope of it being heard, at any rate by a certain section of the public. What was the good of all the attention one had succeeded in attracting if one could not throw a word into the scales at an important turning-point of the spiritual history of man ?

And so, after my visit to Dornach in 1915, I had written a first article in the periodical, Christentum und Gegenwart, of which I had been one of the founders. The article bore the title Dornach und Elmau. For twenty years, from 1895 to 1915, I had followed Johannes Müller in spirit along his path of destiny. Before any Consistory or Faculty of Theology took him seriously, I had been one of his supporters. I do not deny that in those days, and for a long time, I had greater hopes of him than he was afterwards able to fulfil. His experience of the higher "Self" in man,

 his intimation of a higher "Reality," and the "Organ" whereby it might be perceived, gave me a premonition that the dawn of a new era of religion was breaking. But it was just because I had hoped too much of Johannes Müller that I was so cautious, to begin with in regard to Rudolf Steiner. After my experiences in Dornach I felt an impulse to go to Johannes Müller in Elmau in order to draw living comparisons, reliable guiding-lines in the spirit, and to bring my thoughts to clarity. But this first article about Johannes Müller and Rudolf Steiner was only intended as a whetting of the pen.

The magazine Kunstwart seemed to me a suitable channel by which to reach the public. Shorter writings on the subject of religion had won for me a certain right of authorship. The only thing I cared about was that Anthroposophy should some day attract the notice of the public and be taken seriously. Dr. Steiner first heard of my intention when I asked if I might read the article to him beforehand in order to avoid inaccuracies. During the reading, to which he willingly consented, I kept throwing glances at him so that no indication of feeling should escape me. He sat in front of me listening with cool impartiality, and appeared not to be applying more mental exertion and interest than were absolutely essential. The article concluded with a picture which was intended to be an irresistible challenge to the citadel of silence: "... When Nietzsche had lost his mental faculties and was living in Weimar, there came to his house a young man with whom Nietzsche himself could no longer make conscious acquaintance. With his calm, wide-open eyes Nietzsche may have gazed through him into the void. Towards what was he gazing? Was he on the quest of his superman? Perchance a later generation will speak of this meeting as a remarkable symbol of human history."

When I had read this I looked as attentively as possible at Rudolf Steiner. To my astonishment, he asked, almost with curiosity: “And who was the young man?” “Why you yourself, Herr Doctor!” “Oh yes,” he replied, “but

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 83 that was in Naumburg, not in Weimar.” It was extraordinarily interesting to me to see how the geographical error should have made him fail to understand that the reference was quite obviously to himself, and how after the explanation he admitted with such natural assurance the historic importance with which the article invested him. Only pure disinterestedness and at the same time perfect self-confidence could have made such an attitude possible. One who participates second by second in scenes like this, watching the very play of the eyelids, can most certainly have something to say about what is really in a man. It was as if a chorus of spirits whispered: What you say is true! And the one of whom you say it, he also is true!—With the same natural simplicity and freedom with which Rudolf Steiner consented to being thus placed on the stage of history, he passed on to speak of other matters. For a moment his thoughts dwelt upon the article as a whole. His pallid face, which often gave one the impression that in the veins behind the dark skin white blood was streaming, brightened by a scarcely perceptible shade. Then he said thoughtfully: “The article is an achievement—it is really an achievement! It will give offence. But—surely it will not be accepted?” As a matter of fact it was accepted by the editors of the magazine on the condition that the whole of the beginning should be deleted. But even in this mutilated form it was, as I chanced to hear afterwards, a means of introducing several people to Anthroposophy.

Soon after this I began to work at an article for the Christliche Welt, a periodical with which I had continued my connection. I asked Dr. Steiner if I might question him about certain things in his life in order to be well-informed. "Yes, come sometime and I will tell you in detail,” was his reply. When I arrived he said: "Do you mind if I bring Frau Doctor Steiner in?”—And so I was able to listen for longer than an hour, interrupting him with queries as seldom as possible. Faculties of seership were already awakened in his earliest youth when he became aware of the death of a female relative before the news came from outside. But,

after all, his autobiography* has now been published and contains everything he himself was willing to communicate to the public. And for Anthroposophists there is also available in manuscript his Fragment out of My Life, which narrates more or less what I heard at that time, only in more intimate and personal detail. What impressed me most was the way he spoke of the great teachers who had crossed his path. Men of extraordinary spirituality, entirely unknown in public life, were there at the right moment, helping him in critical years to understand and develop his faculties, standing like sponsors at the dawn of his life's mission. Without Rudolf Steiner having spoken of it, one's impression was that long preparation is made for a life like this, that at the right moment the necessary helpers are sent, and that everything leads up to an undertaking which, with wisdom-filled knowledge, is to make an incision in human history. The outer world has not the slightest inkling of it. The life of a leader of mankind with a lofty mission is a work of art in which angels and humans collaborate. It was wonderful to hear in such direct detail of the actual existence of such spiritual leaders of mankind, beings who in the protection of concealment rule behind the veil of human history as foreseers and guides. Those who recall the intervention by one called "The Unknown" in the life of Jacob Boehme, the appearance of the "Friend of God" in the life of Tauler, can get an idea of the things of which Rudolf Steiner spoke on that occasion. The only difference was that here the guidance of these sublime leaders towards a great earthly mission was more consciously and clearly recognised. Strange as this sounded, when one thought of the everyday world, one felt no strangeness about it when Rudolf Steiner was speaking. Nor shall I ever forget the expression on his face when he said of one of these two men: "That was a most significant personality!" His eyes seemed to be steeped in contemplation of him. They were filled with the reverence paid by one great knower to another.

I *The Story of My Life. Anthroposophical Publishing Company, London. Anthroposophie Press, New York.

 Later on he told me that he had once been suddenly saved by a "Master" when he was on the point of

doing something which would have meant death. To my question as to whether either of these two men were still living, and if he ever saw him, he answered: “There is no need.” He felt able at any time to establish a spiritual contact without the outer presence. Once, later on, something made me ask: “Where are the * Initiates’ now, when a life-work like yours is at stake?” He replied: “Spiritual truths have now to be grasped by human thought” “If you were to meet these Initiates to-day you might not find in them anything of what you are seeking. They had their tasks more in earlier incarnations. To-day the thinking of man must be spiritualised.” “Do you not feel utterly alone in your task?” I asked, mindful of the distance which separated him from the rest of us. “I do not feel lonely,” was the quiet reply. —This much may be told from hours during which one was permitted to look into the background of such a life.-----

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To my article in the Christliche Welt, “Von der Theosophie Rudolf Steiners,” Dr. Steiner had suggested the addition of a note in appreciation of Ludwig Laistner, who was on the track of similar ideas. When the article appeared he said to me: “If there are only five who can come forward with the pen as you have done, then we shall forge ahead I ” There was joy in these words. He was pleased with the restrained tone of the article, which asked of people no more than serious consideration and investigation. But I saw him really distressed when, in answer to my article, there appeared one from the pen of Johannes Müller, in which he gave an emotional and urgent warning in regard to Anthroposophy. “At last something has appeared in public in favour of Anthroposophy, and now here comes this man and undoes all the good again!” “I will write another article against him,” I said. “Will you really?” He did not appear to think that much good would come of this.

One counter-article after another are absolutely thankless things. Nobody can wade through them any longer. That too was my experience in connection with this article.

There remains as a living memory of those weeks the way in which Dr. Steiner treated me as if I had advanced in rank. His approval was expressed not so much in words as in confidence. “Now that you have done so well with the article I give you permission to use your own discretion, and bring anyone you like to my private lectures. You need not ask leave any longer.“ And so I was able to smooth the path to Anthroposophy for a number of friends in Berlin—men like Rudolf von Koschutzki, Emil Bock, Eberhard Kurras. Others could not find a point of contact. I was struck with the clarity with which Dr. Steiner saw and expressed this beforehand. “I do not think he will come. His intellectualism will prevent him.”—To my astonishment, in one of his public lectures, Dr. Steiner suddenly mentioned my article in the Christliche Welt which, as I look back at it now, seemed unassuming in the extreme. After the lecture he came up to me and said: “Did you have any objection to my having mentioned you by name? It must be so now if we are to work together.” Even in a simple matter of course which could only be an honour so far as I was concerned, he asked for consent.

During that period I wrote another article on “Max Dessoir and Rudolf Steiner.” In his book, Von Jenseits der Seele, the Berlin scholar had touched upon domains in which Rudolf Steiner was thoroughly at home. The article was written, but I could not think of any periodical likely to accept it. I now saw, for the first time, how much importance Dr. Steiner attached to the fact that Anthroposophy should be presented to the public in the right way. With the keenest interest he mentioned half a dozen periodicals in which it would be “a good thing” to write about the subject, above all the Prussian Yearbook. But my attempt there ended in pitiful failure. I was told that I had laid far too much stress on the difference between Max Dessoir and Rudolf Steiner. The public were more interested in

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 87 knowing where the two men were in agreement, and, above all, what a mind like Dessoir had to say about Rudolf Steiner.' If 1 would recast the article in this sense it would be gladly accepted.—Hopeless, then!—The article was finally accepted and published in a number of the Suddeutsche Monatshefte. But then the editors closed their doors to the [11] Steinerite.” Ihe same man whose articles were never previously refused, was now suddenly not allowed, let alone asked, to

say a word or to wnte about Anthroposophy, a subject with which, after all, he would have been qualified to deal.

It is not possible, and moreover it would be of no interest, to give the details of all that happened in this connection, but 1 will quote the following characteristic experience: Friedrich Gogarten—who was at that time being hailed as the new prophet of Germany—had written an article about Rudolf Steiner in the Frankfurter Zeitung—an article utterly lacking in understanding, scornfully destructive in tone. My rejoinder was returned with the following statement: "We have now discussed the Steiner problem many times and will continue to do so, but we car.not agree to have it elucidated from a point of view that is contrary to our editorial policy. Tolerant of course we are, but we cannot allow our tolerance to come to the point of selfabnegation.*'

The flood of counter-articles broke in -with all the greater force after the Threefold Commonwealth idea had stirred up the passions of the political and economic world against Rudolf Steiner. The verdict was "Boycott," and the ban was also put upon his friends. The invisible pope cf public opinion had issued his decree.

This series of experiences shall conclude with a mention of the book Vom Lebenswerk Rudolf Steiners.[9] His words, "If there are only five . . ?' had haunted me. I wanted to find those five, and if possible more of like mind, and unite them into a common action for Rudolf Steiner in public. His sixtieth birthday gave the outer opportunity

•Published by Chr.Kaistr Verlag, Munich, 1921

for this. One portion of humanity's debt to him should be absolved that day. My own contribution to the book could only be dictated during a long illness. I did not know at the time whether I was going to recover, and I turned over in my mind the debt I myself owed humanity, in case my time was coming to depart. And so I wrote down my experience of Rudolf Steiner as a kind of testament. The following passage from a letter will

show how he received this evidence of allegiance. It is practically the only time the book was mentioned between us:

. . In the name of the Anthroposophical Movement let me thank you most cordially for your book. It is certainly put together in a way which reckons wisely in the circles in which it may have some effect. And if its actual contents were to come before the world without any relation to me, it could not help doing an incalculable amount of good. But there is no escaping it —the Gods have laid it upon me that I must be personally connected with all that is done through Anthroposophy. And I may not do other than I do. In our age, the right calls forth the most bitter enmity. Your essay on the judgments I expressed during the War could not have been more justified. Yet the effects of it are echoing on in many things that our opponents are now undertaking. Only they, of course, cannot say that. They must often say something quite different to themselves than they say to others.

"And so it will be with many things that speak out of your book. It will annoy many people, but you must not let yourself be discouraged thereby. The book has sprung from the effort to form this judgment: How must a modern man of theological training and sincere religious feeling think about Anthroposophy? And this judgment speaks out of the book. Such is its will and intention, and the will is justified. That is my impression—one which has evolved in a time which was not particularly favourable—for since you sent the book to me, an act for which I am very grateful, I have had to get through a period of strenuous work. Everything in the Anthroposophical Movement is really only

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 89 at the beginning, and one's chief concern is to develop it. This is constantly being borne in upon my soul. For instance, what I have been able to give in the course of lectures to doctors which has just come to an end—it is all so much a beginning. What I said in that course are only the very first rudiments, and what should further come out of it is something vastly greater. Tasks are there, and time is lacking for everything. This is only meant to be an objective statement of how things are; it cannot, of course, be otherwise. If my words seem like dismal sighing, this impression would not be correct. I say this because things must be done, not in order to complain that so much fails to be done.

You, dear Dr. Rittelmeyer, have issued your book to the world at a time of great personal hardship. But so far as the book is concerned, your illness has really been the bringer of leisure, enabling you to do even better what you would in any case have done bravely and forcibly during a period of health which would have been overburdened with work. And so, in the name of the Movement, again warmest thanks and cordial greetings.

"Yours with affection,

"R. Steiner."

To the joy of those who contributed to the book, Dr. Steiner said, at a meeting three years later, that the book was the strongest gesture that had yet been made in the direction of bringing Anthroposophy to the notice of the public.

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During the World War Rudolf Steiner was a wonderful experience to me. Never once in those years did I hear him give a private lecture without previously directing the thoughts of his hearers to those on the battlefields and to the fallen. He always spoke a longish verse, in which the power of helping thoughts was expressed. He had given meditations of this kind for those fighting on the battlefields, those caring for the sick, those at home. And the words were pregnant with inner, strength-giving power.

His lectures during the first year of the War have already been mentioned. When I asked him, in the later years of the War, why his lectures were no longer like they were at the beginning, he replied: "Because now one would have to say many things which one may not say."—And so he tried to help in other ways. The inner participation with which he followed the events was vital in the extreme. From time to time he would speak of detailed happenings at the Front in a way that made one wonder whether he could have gleaned them from the newspapers or whether he had not, far more likely, seen them in direct vision. He spoke so concretely, and with such vital concern that one shared all the experiences of those at the ront. He was

so permeated with the world-mission of the spirit of Middle Europe, and desired so intensely that it should be fulfilled, not merely chattered about. He loved the world-mission of Germany, but it was a love born of hope and of care. Spirit was there, not mere enthusiasm. Nor was an unjust or even antagonistic word about other nations ever uttered—naturally not. Dr. Steiner was no more a nationalist in the narrow sense than he was a pacifist in the shallow sense. He rightly said that the age of pacifism is the age of the Great War. He inaugurated the beginnings of future fellowship among the peoples, and in the land where the League of Nations holds its sessions there rose the Goetheanum—the Building at which members of more than twelve nations worked during the War.

At the beginning of 1917, when Woodrow Wilson launched his Fourteen Points on the world, there began for Dr. Steiner a new period of activity in connection with the War. “A word of the spirit must now go forth from Middle Europe. If this does not happen we shall succumb to this Wilson programme. It is having a much stronger effect than Germany realises.” . . . “Middle Europe cannot exist under Wilson’s Fourteen Points. But they must be answered from out of a spirit which is the right and true spirit for Middle Europe. Otherwise they will gain the day.” About a year later, before the last offensive, a friend of mine

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 91 heard him say: "Wilson will bring great misfortune to Middle Europe and achieve nothing he wishes to achieve." Now that this spirit had spoken in the West, Rudolf Steiner thought that the spirit on this side too should speak. Herein he felt his call. It was then, at the beginning of 1917, that he once spoke, after a lecture, of the occult methods which were being used with such power in Western countries. I replied: "If false occultism is so active nowadays, should not true occultism be able to bring something about?" "Yes," he said, "and that is why I am trying to do something now." —"What ought to happen?" I asked. "Two things. Firstly, the publication of a clear and documentary statement of what was going on at the outbreak of war—hour by hour. Bethmann’s declarations are no use at all. One can believe them or not. But if everything that happened then is ruthlessly told, the world will see that Germany was not so cunning and much less to blame than people think. But that is only one side of it. A word must be spoken about a future régime in

Middle Europe which corresponds truly to the historical position, and in which it will be possible to live." He said that if this were done, one would see the Statesmen of the Entente, while saying little officially, immediately beginning to change their tactics. They would realise the existence in Germany of a spiritual power not so lightly to be brushed aside, and they would fear that their own people might pay heed to what was going on, and want to get it for themselves too. One must now act resolutely and on a broad scale. The people of Austria would then say to themselves: "If that can really be carried through among us, we have no interest in allying ourselves with Russia." The working classes in Germany would also be able to win back confidence in a State that goes forward with a true kind of freedom. And among the peoples of the Entente, the feeling would arise: We have been mistaken. There in Middle Europe a coming age is actually speaking. We must come to terms with it.—Only so was there now any possibility of a favourable outcome of the War.

Shortly after this Dr. Steiner gave me a copy of the

 manuscript he was trying to bring before leading statesmen in Germany and Austria through the intermediary of friends. Nothing was more remote from him than personal ambition. But—had he any right to remain silent when he knew how to help? When I asked him what I could do in this matter, he answered: “Articles are no use these days; the only thing to do is to get at the men at the top. One must be alert to opportunities that may offer themselves in this direction." In company with other Anthroposophists at that time, and especially later on, I wrote letters to leading men asking them to take the thing seriously. But alas! it was all in vain. I often saw Rudolf Steiner come back exhausted from conversations with leading men. One of them said to him: “You may be right, but I am not your man.”—“You must be the man, because you have the position,” was the answer. Another said to him: “What you propose—the publication of an account of what happened at the outbreak of war, would lead to the abdication of the Emperor.” “Then that is better now than later,” answered Dr. Steiner. During those months I once met him with a newspaper in his hand. He was deeply perturbed. “Here is Bethmann-Hollweg making another idiotic speech. It will scare peace away

for another six months. Not a single concrete utterance about Belgium! It does not help at all in the long run. It merely helps political action."

Deeply engraved in my memory is a conversation I had with Dr. Steiner in his room, during the first six months of 1917. Hindenburg's famous retreat had come about. All Germany was rejoicing at the unerring strategy of the new Chief.—What was Dr. Steiner's opinion of the position? "It is really a piece of good luck that we now have Hindenburg and Ludendorff," I began. I looked at an unmoved face. "Well," he said slowly, "Hindenburg is an old man who pulled off the affair up there. (He was referring to the Mazurian Lakes.) But of course you know that the main work is being done by the Chief of the General Staff." I certainly did not know this at the time, but went on with

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 93 my questions: "So the bright spot for Germany is now Ludendorff?" I was already uncertain. Dr. Steiner looked at me thoughtfully and seriously. "It is not in the interest of Germany to have such Generals!" came from his lips. "What do you mean?" I asked, in astonishment. "Well, the two of them have managed to pull off this retreat with all the devastations. Anyone who can estimate what that means for the future of Germany, can only say that it is not in her interest to have such Generals." It was a shock to me. When I look back to-day, I ask: Who was there in Germany at that time who saw things with this clarity of perception? Every week I had conversations with men from University circles who were regarded as leaders of thought. But what blindness they had in comparison with Rudolf Steiner when one had just talked with him! Even from the military point of view he was not to be impressed. So far as the highest Army Command was concerned he thought nothing of what was being achieved in the way of leadership. He also considered that this war of materials and mass did not offer, as earlier wars had done, any opportunity for really fine strategy. And political interference on the part of the Supreme Command! In justice, he said: "One really cannot be too hard on them. They at least are doing something, the others nothing at all."

A singularly interesting experience during those months shall be recorded here for historical reasons. It was at Midsummer, 1917. Kühlmann had

resigned. Dr. Steiner said one day: “You are always keen on knowing things that are confirmed afterwards. Now I will tell you something. I have discovered that Moltke (not the Chief of the General Staff, but his uncle, the Field Marshal) is now trying to work for peace from the spiritual world. And, now read Kühlmann’s speech. Again and again he quotes the old Moltke. It was agreed that he should say nothing about peace in his speech. The others—I will not mention names —went to Kühlmann afterwards and reproached him for having broken his agreement. Kühlmann told them that he did not know himself what made him do such a thing."

And then Dr. Steiner gave a poignant description of Kühlmann’s bodily condition that particular morning which resulted in a somewhat lowered consciousness. This made him particularly susceptible to supersensible influences, and they flowed into him under the most unfortunate conditions.

One day in the summer of 1917 I again met Dr. Steiner with a newspaper near by. He always made a point of reading a number of papers of varied persuasions. “Have you yet read about the Pope’s gesture for peace? Woe betide us if we had to accept peace from the hand of the Pope!” “Do you think it is coming to that? ” I asked. “And what do you think about it? ” “I think,” I replied, “that this new gesture for peace will simply increase the universal war-weariness. That is all that will happen.” “There you are placing far too low an estimate on the influence of the Pope,” was the answer. In all the things Dr. Steiner said to me during the War, this was the point where he proved to be not entirely correct. At all events his words seemed to suggest more hope than was afterwards fulfilled. But nowadays one knows that fundamentally he was right. It is now known how real were the possibilities of peace at that time. If the Reichstag had been correctly informed everything might have turned out quite differently.

Michaelis was made Imperial Chancellor in those days, and at the very beginning I expressed the view—which was contrary to prevailing opinion —that, once again, he was not the right man for the position. “He is not,” Dr. Steiner said. “The best thing one can say about him is that for the time being he is keeping the position away from someone still less suitable.” “And who is that?” I asked with some curiosity. “Hertling,” was the reply.

And when, in spite of everything, Hertling became Chancellor, Dr. Steiner said: “It is simply outrageous that there should be such a Chancellor!”

Kerensky’s régime was overthrown. “Surely we shall have peace with Russia now?” I asked. Rudolf Steiner shook his head. “Peace with Russia would have had to be

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 95 made at the latest by August, 1917. It is now too late.” At the turn of the year 1917-18 Dr. Steiner grew more and more sorrowful and hopeless. “Peace ought to have been made in the year 1916. In 1917, with a widely conceived spiritual plan, it was still a possibility. In 1918 it is no longer possible. Of course I do not mean that an outer ending of the war is impossible. But it will not be peace as peace has previously been made. The war will go on merely in a different guise.” I remembered something Dr. Steiner had said in the early days of the war: “In the year 1916 the war will essentially be at an end.”—His words had come true in a sense other than I had understood at the time.

Dr. Steiner took an extraordinarily grave view of the menace of Bolshevism. I never saw a more serious expression on his face than when he said: “If Bolshevism were to come it would be worse than the whole of the war. When they carry Bolshevism over to Russia and conduct leaders in closed carriages through Germany, these Statesmen seem to imagine that Bolshevism will hereafter stop at the boundaries of their own country!”

The deepest disquietude I ever saw him manifest was after the peace of Brest-Litovsk. I met him in the street on the way to his lecture. “What do you think of this Peace Treaty?” he asked me. “I do not like it at all,” I said, “but at least we have now a breathing-space in the East. And perhaps it will be possible, after general peace has been made, to atone for the acts of military violence.” “It is terrible, simply terrible!” Dr. Steiner said. “You should see what effect it is having on the dead, especially on those who are connected with us and who have themselves been taking part in these events. It is like an explosion; it simply hurls them back.—Oh! it is awful!” From then onwards he seemed to have lost all hope of a bearable termination of the war. “Now things are heading straight into chaos I ”

The offensive in the spring of 1918 awakened new hope in many Germans, myself included. Dr. Steiner never had it for a moment. “What do you mean,” I asked him, “don’t you

96 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE think we shall get to Calais?” “Well, we may,” he replied. * But I cannot see how that will help us. That is not the way to end the war.” His words about Calais were the other small inaccuracy I heard from his lips. I do not withhold it, and in any case it is of no significance compared with the amazing clarity with which he perceived hundreds of things of which others were hardly even aware. Nothing essential is omitted from this narrative and nothing glossed over. It is for everyone to judge for himself whether Dr. Steiner’s knowledge has stood the test of the subsequent years.

When I look back on these experiences to-day: Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the needs of the German position, the possibilities of peace, the personalities of the leaders, the significance of single events, the happenings in Russia-—compared with Rudolf Steiner’s political insight, everyone else with whom I spoke, even the highly-placed, seemed to be mere dreamers. Here there was real vision, real action, and everything else —I know of no exception—seemed, in comparison with it, a blind stumbling through events. In those early months of the year 1917, when Rudolf Steiner came upon the scenes, the historical picture was remarkable in the extreme. Out of unknown obscurity appears a man.—He goes to the Statesmen of Middle Europe and shows them the way to salvation. To-day it can be clearly seen that this indeed would have been the only way. The Statesmen listened to him with interest and partial agreement, but not one of them had the strength and the courage to act. Dr. Steiner had no personal ambitions whatever. He would have been quite content to remain in the background and give help to those who were responsible in the world of affairs. But before help can be given, two are necessary: one who helps and another who allows himself to be helped. Men of a religious turn of mind might say: It was as though prayers had been heard from a thousand hearts: the helper appeared—but his help was not accepted.

It is easy to imagine the feelings of those who had experienced such things during the war, when, after its conclusion, Rudolf Steiner made one more

effort to help. To

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 97 the public this will seem like the exaggerated, inept words of a Steinerite." But the public does not realise how things looked to those who said to themselves : * * He was not listened to the first time. Nor will he be listened to the second time. And then for many years, perhaps for decades, it will be too late."

When the collapse came I was not near Rudolf Steiner, for I did not see him between the end of July, 1918, and September, 1919« What he was saying and doing during that period is preserved in many lectures and in the memories of others. In this book I am only recounting what I myself experienced. At that time he was waging a superhuman fight for two things: to save the workers of Germany from the menace of Bolshevism and the German nation from the Treaty dictated to them at Versailles.

In September, 1919, when I saw Dr. Steiner again in Berlin, he told me that great offence had been caused in educated circles by his appearance at "Workers'" Meetings. —He could only say that if he had spoken as these people wished, the workers would simply not have understood him. In a discussion with workmen in Berlin at that time, I saw Rudolf Steiner from a new angle—amazingly quick and alert as always, but at the same time imposingly active and energetic. His counter-arguments poured down with devastating force on those who were opposing him. One of the lesser leaders, a man not without some knowledge of his own, but who made a conceited little speech, was so flattened by Rudolf Steiner that he left the hall and wept in the vestibule. "It would not be exactly a pleasure to come up against him here," I thought to myself. "But to see him like this is a real joy! "

In conversation he was all the more peaceable. On the way to a lecture he chatted pleasantly about India. I had asked him if it was possible, in order to save time, to carry through one or more spiritual tasks at the same time. He said that it certainly was. Occult investigations could be made while a conversation was actually going on. But one could not expect the same of a European body as of an

Indian. Indians might be capable of sending their bodies into a town to do something and at the same time of remaining where they were, in deep meditation. He said that our European bodies were not suitable for such separations. At the same time, with his usual sympathy, he noticed that I had injured my foot, went on to speak of earlier incarnations—and the next minute was engaged in lightning-like spiritual battles.

At that time—the autumn of 1919—he said in public: The Threefold Social Order is coming. In about fifteen to twenty years it will be there. But then it will come in the midst of many catastrophes.

Since all help in the political sphere was out of the question, he turned his attention to domains where it could be given, and where there were men willing to accept it: education of the young, agriculture, therapeutics. The unabated energy with which he did this, without a trace of embitterment, was in itself an evidence of world-historic greatness.—But from then onwards, in the cultural-political world, the WestEast problem stood in all its magnitude and many-sidedness before his spirit.

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In contrast to these experiences in the realm of political life, there were others quite different in character of which some account shall now be given.

At that time the Anthroposophical Society had among its members an officer of higher rank who was stationed in Berlin, and who held a position of respect both in military and society circles. He fell seriously ill. Dr. Steiner said one evening: “N.’s condition is very grave. Unless a miracle happens he will die to-morrow.” In such cases an unusual and most impressive sorrow was invariably written on his face. "What is wrong with him, then?” I asked. "If I see rightly there is something at the pyloric end of the stomach which can be operated upon. But the doctors cannot be persuaded to operate. You can imagine what one feels when one sees that something could be done to help and the

 doctors cannot bring themselves to do it. I have told N.’s wife that she must jump at the slightest

hint of an operation. That, of course, is all one can do."—On another occasion I saw Dr. Steiner, who always had the most living sympathy in cases of illness and death among the members, very grave and anxious. "When I arrived, death had already crept up to the throat. I fought with death all through the night— and have been defeated." "What, you mean to say that you fight with death even when you see that things have got to that point ?" I asked him. "Can one do otherwise ? "

In N.'s case death actually occurred the next morning. At the request of Dr. Steiner, who was full of concern for the wife in her loneliness, an Anthroposophist came to me and asked if I would go and see him about noon ; he wanted to tell me something about the dead man in order that I might hold the funeral service. When I arrived Dr. Steiner said: "This morning, before I was up, N. came and said farewell. Twenty minutes afterwards a messenger came with the news of his death." For a moment I had to pull myself together, for he spoke so naturally and simply of meeting one who was dead. "What is it like when a dead man says farewell?" I asked him. "Oh it is just as when a man comes into the room on some other occasion," he said with a smile. "He simply comes and says farewell. During the first hours after death it is quite easy to see such a thing. After that it becomes more difficult." Then he told me that he had suggested a post-mortem. "I did so in order also to check my own observation." The result was that, contrary to the diagnosis of the doctors, a tumour at the pit of the stomach had been the cause of death. "The doctors think, of course, that it would have been inoperable. This operation is only considered possible with children. They do not know that it is possible with children and also with men like N. who have meditated a great deal. My opinion has been confirmed by the post-mortem."

A few days later I held the funeral service in the large hall of a Berlin Lodge, and afterwards another in a Berlin cemetery. Dr. Steiner was one of the mourners. It was a

strange spectacle to see him sitting there so simply among the others who had no idea of the man he was. When I went away from the grave to my carriage he came along the path and I walked a few steps with him. "Are

the dead really there when one is giving their funeral oration?" I asked, and waited eagerly to see what he would reply to this unexpected question. "When you spoke of the words which had comforted him on his death-bed, he came and stayed there until Prince X. got up so abruptly and went away. Then I did not see him any more." Again I tried to realise the extraordinary situation. There among three hundred others was a man who had experienced this.—But nobody could have guessed it. What kind of faces would they have pulled if they had suddenly seen what was happening?— "It must often be very unpleasant for the dead to be obliged to listen to these funeral orations ! " I continued. Dr. Steiner replied: "I have never noticed that. If they have no inner relation to what is said they stay away."—In my student days I had once come across a book entitled Letters from Hell. There was a drastic description of how the Devil has a specially diabolical reception in store for those who have played a certain rôle in public life, namely that they must read the funeral speeches that are made over their corpse on earth. "Now our Father in Heaven has taken our beloved dead to His eternal mansions" . . . and so forth. I made a resolve at the time: "Never in my life will I give a burial speech to which the dead himself could not listen 1 " My speeches afterwards often seemed very inadequate to those who had been bereaved and were hungering for praise of the dead. But what Dr. Steiner had said struck a chord in harmony with my own endeavours.

Of course Dr. Steiner only spoke as unreservedly and as concretely as this to people whom he knew would not be shocked by it. But in such cases there was never anything uncanny. It was said quite humanly, in the most quiet and natural way—as though the walls of this earthly world had suddenly been broken through and the people from beyond appeared among the living. One felt in actual experience:

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE ioi there is not a "this world" and a "world beyond." No, there is one world, with a visible and an invisible realm, and this "invisible" realm is actually there and can make itself perceptible at any minute—if there is a man who is sensitive to it.

Not in the very remotest degree did Dr. Steiner demand belief in what he said. He simply narrated, and let others make of it what they could.

The following experience may throw light on Rudolf Steiner's connection with the great domain of life in which the dead also play a part. The Director of an Institute in Berlin had asked me to go and look at a collection of pictures left by a young artist who had fallen in the War. The pictures seemed to suggest that all kinds of influences from the supersensible world had impelled him to artistic expression.

I asked Dr. Steiner if he would be able to go with me. "I will come and fetch you," was his reply. While he was sitting for a moment in my room, he looked round at everything attentively and said kindly: "That over there is beautiful." Then we walked with Frau Dr. Steiner through the streets of the inner city to the Institute. The pictures were studied in all leisureliness. What impressed me was the assurance and expert knowledge of art that was manifested in every sentence Dr. Steiner spoke. But I was even more impressed with the characteristically loving way in which he talked of every detail, always taking his start from what the artist had really set out to express. The only suggestion of criticism was when he showed how the will behind the pictures could have led more perfectly to the reality. This impelled me to ask: "Has the dead man been able to hear what you were saying?" "Certainly," was the answer. "I got into contact with him and spoke to him and tried to help." An entirely new conception of communion with the achievements of those no longer on the earth arose in me. While we were going home in the underground railway Dr. Steiner spoke of something quite different. "I would not mind getting a touch of influenza in order to study it." The next day he had it, and more than a touch! He

 gave his lecture just the same, in spite of many fits of coughing. Several years later, when he sat by my sick-bed and gave me advice and help for influenza, I could not help remembering this incident. I thought of Pettenkofer who studied bacilli by making experiments on himself. The many to whom Dr. Steiner's treatment of disease has proved a blessing will do well to realise that all the help he was able to give was bought at the cost of sacrifice.

It was not possible for Dr. Steiner's living contact with the world of the dead to remain wholly unknown in Berlin. Now and then people whose thoughts were with their dead came to me with the request that I would

introduce them to him. So far as I remember I only did this in one single instance. A man in Berlin, much respected, and justly so, had entreated me, in circumstances which seemed healthy, to comply with his wish. Dr. Steiner interested himself in the case with great kindness and readiness to help. After a few weeks the man came to me and said: “Dr. Steiner is really a seer. He told me details that he could only have known through clairvoyance.” But then he was again beset with doubt as to whether, after all, it was not possible for such truths to have been extracted from the working of his own subconscious mind.

Many cases made one realise how necessary it was for Dr. Steiner to be protected by a certain measure of concealment. Otherwise it would have been impossible for him to fulfil his life-tasks in face of the onslaught of those who came to him with their requests. For instance, a lady came to me on one occasion, saying: “I think you know Rudolf Steiner? Do you really believe that he can foretell the future?” “Why do you want to know?” I asked her. “Well, you see, I am unhappily married. As a matter of fact I have decided to let myself be divorced. But then I lose my whole fortune. If Dr. Steiner can tell me that my husband will die this year, I have decided to hold out just twelve months, but certainly not longer.” In cases like this I refused to give Dr. Steiner’s address, although it could have been found in any directory. Such examples showed me very clearly that

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 103 the whole position was extraordinarily difficult for Dr. Steiner. He had his faculties, and could not wholly conceal them if he wished to help mankind. And on the other hand, he had to take care that what he had to say was accepted with common sense, and tested. Only with the greatest inner purity which quells even the slightest stirring of egotism, was it possible to do anything along these lines.

It is simply not possible to speak in detail of everything that helped me personally to form my judgment and strengthen my conviction. All that can be attempted is a general picture that will counteract false ideas and strengthen the reader’s confidence in his own calm, objective investigation.

At the conclusion of this series of experiences, one more conversation shall be mentioned. After a lecture I once asked Dr. Steiner: “Have you ever

come across my dead mother in the spiritual world? ” He replied: “When you are listening to a lecture an individuality often comes whom I take to be your mother. She brings others with her. She is a little restless and moves to and fro. But she takes the deepest interest in your spiritual life.” Then he turned to my wife, who was often present at such talks, and said in a most kindly way: “On the other hand, I have not yet succeeded in getting into touch with your dead father.”

What struck me as significant was the cautious expression: “An individuality whom I take to be. . . .” But there was also the accurate description of my mother and the mention of the “others”—obviously my dead sisters, of whom I had never told him. And, not least, there was the kindly consideration for what my wife must have been feeling at that moment.

But now, as I look back, my thoughts carry me farther.— What experiences might Rudolf Steiner not have had during a single lecture! I heard of other examples of different supersensible impressions he had while he was lecturing, in connection with various individuals. There were occasions — so I gather 'from many statements I have heard—when his lecture would be addressed chiefly to one individual. But

104 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE on the other hand his large public lectures were often veritable battles of spirits. In a dim way people sensed this. But as they only looked at Rudolf Steiner with physical eyes, they held him for a demon, whereas the truth was that he was waging war against the “demons.” If they had paid heed to what he said at such times instead of letting themselves be carried away by superficial first impressions, they would have been able to recognise this.

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I also had talks with Dr. Steiner on science, but only occasionally. My limitations as a humanist prevented me from conducting the conversations at the level at which alone they would have been justified. On this subject it is for others to speak. My own experience in this domain was twofold. I used to send young scientists and doctors who were interested in Anthroposophy and who came to me, direct to Rudolf Steiner, saying: “Just

begin to ask questions about the branch of which you know the most and see what you will find." When I inquired afterwards, it was always the same story: "Oh! yes, he was at home in that domain, too, and gave me important suggestions." Among several dozen younger and older scholars I did not find one who spoke in a different sense, or was able to feel himself superior to Dr. Steiner in the realm of Natural Science.

Apart from this, all I can say is that only now, when the light of Spiritual Science had been shed upon them, did the sciences really begin to interest me. It is impossible to describe the unutterable relief of a man whose life's interest had been centred in religion, to find his feet in the realm of a science of nature which did not stand cold and aloof, nay even hostile, by the side of religion, cognisant only of dead laws. This science of nature let the living spirit of God shine through all things, and brought to all the sciences the waters of spiritual baptism; in the depths of things were the same revelations of life as have been proclaimed in religion: sacrifice, death, resurrection.—What I had always prophesied many years before, namely that the laws of physics

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 105 and chemistry would some day be revealed to a purified understanding as emanations from the same loving God Who revealed Himself in Christianity—this was suddenly there, in tangible form, before me. To-day, now that Anthroposophy is there, one can say to all investigators: Study everything that is of the earth profoundly, purely and spiritually enough, and there will be revealed to you the same shining countenance as we too see. At bottom there is only one truth, because there is only one reality.

Let me still add the following.—About the middle of the year 1918 I once said to Dr. Steiner: "Herr Doctor, when the War is over, a research institute ought to be founded where attempts could be made to investigate the results of Spiritual Science with such scientific means as lend themselves to this. I already have a few hundred marks and know one or two young scholars who would certainly be available for the work." Dr. Steiner put both his hands on my shoulders and said with a joy I seldom saw in him: "Yes, indeed, dear Dr. Rittelmeyer, we will do it I " At that moment one could see quite clearly what he really had at heart. The research institute actually

came into being, although in a different form, not in Berlin but in Dornach and Stuttgart. And if millions of marks were available and, instead of a few scientists, a large number of important co-workers, great blessing to humanity might be the result, in spite of the fact that Dr. Steiner himself is no longer here to direct the research.

As I had to limit the number of my questions, I kept for the most part to affairs of general human interest, to the specifically occult, historical and religious domains. It was certainly a new world for a Protestant theologian. Protestant theology, which had hitherto been my sphere, was in the deeper sense not taken really seriously—at all events it did not by any means play an important part. In the early years I often asked myself whether Dr. Steiner really knew of our work.—He knew right enough! It gradually emerged in our conversations that he had read Harnack, Troeltsch, Otto, Weinel, Heim. He knew Schleiermacher, too, and let him

 pass muster as a theologian but not as a philosopher. He once said: “The historical and critical research carried out by Protestantism is undoubtedly the most assiduous and keen-witted of recent centuries. In this sense it is on a par with, nay even excels, scientific research. But the tragedy is that the work is entirely on the wrong track, and completely misses what is really in the Bible.” Deeply shaken to think that such might be the case, I went home.

With miscellaneous questions, too, I tried to find out what I could of the way things presented themselves to Dr. Steiner. “Do you not think that in the Gospel of St. John we have the words of Christ as they were reflected in a particular individuality, whereas the Synoptics present Christ’s actual way of speaking?” “To me it is just the reverse,” was the reply. “When I read St. John’s Gospel I find my way immediately into the language Christ really spoke. With the Synoptic Gospels I must first adjust myself.” One can realise how deeply such a statement conflicted with theology in general, but also what a relief it was to a man who had steeped himself in the John Gospel, and had from the very beginning tried to vindicate it from a deep inner consciousness. “And the farewell words of Christ? Were they spoken so?” “Certainly, they were; but many other words were spoken as well

which have not been recorded." When Rudolf Steiner was speaking of such matters it was always with particular humility and reverence.

"And Christ's words on the Cross—were they actually spoken so?" "Certainly they were." But why is it, then, that one Evangelist gives one account and another a different one? " I asked. "They were not, of course, giving an historical account. There are no historical records. The Evangelists tell what was revealed to them as truth after deep contemplation of the events, even when they had not actually witnessed them. And so one word came to one, another to another, each according to his particular preparation." Naturally there will have to be a great deal of "unlearning" before theology will be able to accept a view like this. The

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 107 sense in which it was meant only dawned on me later on, when I thought about the words which, in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke puts into the mouth of the dying Stephen. I realised how exactly the three words corresponded to the three words of the dying Christ recorded by Luke in his Gospel. One must assume, therefore, that Luke had often heard impressive accounts of the death of Stephen from the Apostle Paul, and that this awakened his soul to the three words spoken from the Cross. A modern historian will most certainly draw quite different conclusions from this. But it is also certain that these conclusions need not necessarily be accepted as the last word and that there are still other possibilities to be investigated.

I remember so well the tone in which Rudolf Steiner once spoke of the Last Supper. It was only in memory that I became fully conscious of it. It was a tone that could not fail to call forth the greatest reverence in any sensitive man. Many a time, later on, I thought to myself that if one could always speak of the truths of religion in this spirit it could not fail to convince men, because they would simply be taken into the higher reality. But whether he was dealing with the burning of the Templars, or of the "Friend of God" from the Oberland, Dr. Steiner always spoke as if he needed no history books, but had himself been an actual witness of all these events.

And now—Luther?—In the middle of the year 1917 I once had a meal with Dr. Steiner. He mentioned words of Hermann Grimm, I think it was, to the effect that Germans will always feel themselves united in the work of

Luther, Frederick the Great, Goethe and Bismarck. “But the work of Frederick the Great and Bismarck is now destroyed,” he said. “Goethe’s real genius has not had its effect. And Luther has really had very little influence upon the German nation as a whole.” I said a few words in the contrary sense. But on occasions like this I was much more concerned with getting to know Dr. Steiner’s opinion than that he should hear mine. It seemed to me then that he had found little inducement to go more deeply into the question of Luther.

Let me here add something for those in the ranks of old-established Christianity who inquire, without any prejudice, about Anthroposophy,

At the time of the Reformation Jubilee, in 1917, Dr. Steiner unexpectedly gave two private lectures about Luther. Their interest to theologians can well be imagined. It was a question of showing the points of difference between Anthroposophy and Protestant Christianity—and these differences clearly transpired. Luther’s aim: subjective salvation. Steiner’s aim: objective reality. Fundamentally different attitudes in the world 1 Dr. Steiner was interested in what Luther saw. For example, he regarded Luther’s fights with the Devil as actual struggles with the approaching spirit of subsequent centuries, with the Spirit of materialistic intellectualism, known in Anthroposophy as Ahriman. He also held that Luther’s much deplored coarseness was due to his ° Imaginations,” which did not, however, rise to the level of clear consciousness. “So when Luther writes against the ‘crowned sow of Engelland’ he was seeing supersensible pictures of the being of King Henry before him?” I asked after the lecture. “Yes,” was the reply. “None of the others around him understood, and for that reason Luther would not be interfered with. He knew that he saw more than the others.”—So here was Luther being defended by an outsider in regard to what is apt to make out and out Lutherans despair, namely: his polemics and his “devil superstition.” But Dr. Steiner explained that just because Luther lived at the turning-point of two epochs, and, in spite of mediæval forces which were working in him, was, nevertheless, feeling his way into the future—just because of this, he was able to give Christianity a form which could live on provisionally through the coming centuries.

But—Sin and Grace? This was, after all, the most fundamental experience in Luther! “Rudolf Steiner has not understood that at all,”—so say the theologians.—He understood it so little that he spoke more profoundly and poignantly than all his contemporaries of the actuality and

 influence of Evil. He investigated the history of the Fall into Sin and perceived its consequences on the one hand in nature herself and on the other in thought, which has become abstract, vapid, dead, wherever one looks in theology. A later epoch will be faced with the remarkable phenomenon in history that the man who spoke as none other before him—not subjectively but objectively—of the terrible havoc wrought by Evil, should have had to put up with being reproached by theologians that he did not know the meaning of Sin.

And Grace? He understood it so little that, as none other before him, he taught the Christ-Deed—that act of Grace unmerited by us and far transcending all our thinking—as the all decisive event in human history without which the whole of mankind would have been lost, but which they could not have brought to pass of themselves—an event so decisive that upon it rested the whole future of humanity and of each individual. He understood “so little” that he said: “The higher one rises, the more does everything become Grace.” But he said little about it, and he did not speak in the language of the theologians.

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This book is not an apologia but an account of a theologian's experience of Rudolf Steiner. One more point, however, may be mentioned. Karma and reincarnation—the laws of destiny and rebirth. They are exactly contrary to the Christian experience of Grace and the biblical Gospel of salvation—so it is said. Over against this let it be stated with all emphasis that in our time both these truths, although they are not found in the Bible, can be recognised as Christian truths. For me they are not so much scientific results of spiritual research with which Christianity has to come to terms—although they are that too—but far rather actual demands of Christianity when it is rightly understood.

Think of it for a moment: a man passes into the higher world. How will it be with him? For a time he may rejoice to find himself free of the earth and all her misery. But

then, if he is allowed a prayer—what will it be? He will surely wish again to meet all those human beings whom he wronged in earthly life, and he will crave for the opportunity to do good to those whom he wronged on earth. ° Grace" will lie precisely in this, that he asks if this may be granted him. The law of Karma may have appeared in the East as irrevocable world-necessity—in the light of Christ it becomes an act of Grace, our own free wish. But that act of Grace—the only one of which we usually hear mention— namely that a man has been seized by the reality of Christ, that act of Grace must have gone before in order to make such a wish possible at all.

And now suppose the man in the other world is allowed a second request—what will he wish? He will wish that he may help the Christ where His task is heaviest and most menaced, where Christ Himself suffers and has to fight most bitterly. This wish, if it were fulfilled, would lead the man back again to the earth.

It is not Christian to long for rest and blessedness far from the miseries of earth. It is Christian to bear within one the consciousness which once

brought Christ from Heaven to earth, to find one's joy in being like unto Him and to work with Him wherever He may need us. The whole truth of the Christian doctrine of Resurrection remains intact—as could be shown in a theological treatise—indeed increases in clarity and grandeur.

The Christian Community, in the service of which I now live, has no dogmas—most certainly not reincarnation. Everyone can live in the Christian Community who is at one with us in devotion to Christ, even if he says: I reject all these things. But those who leave others freedom have also the right to claim freedom for themselves. And in the name of this same freedom let it be said: The truth of reincarnation is a word of Christ to our time. It comes at the right hour, just when the path to the christianising of the East is to be made free.

AU these things form part of a theologian's experience of Rudolf Steiner.

And now aU the grand old truths by which Christianity

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE in has been nourished through the centuries—the Trinity, Divine Sonship, the Divine Death, Resurrection, the Last Judgment, World-Renewal—lit up again like the everlasting stars. But not as if they had been taken from some divine decree and driven home by dialectic. They were now revealed as the deepest realities of the world—which, after all, are only fully known to those who are willing to unite their whole being with them in a human sense. How often had I not said in earlier years, in contrast to many other "modern theologians": There is truth in all these "dogmas," more truth indeed than dialectics and ethics distil out of them to-day. But we cannot honestly claim to possess them; we must wait until they come to us on our path in a new form.—This waiting was now fulfilled. One could possess these truths again fully and sincerely even if one's attitude to the scientific conscience of the time was not merely negative, even if one recognised its relative validity. For the scientific conscience of our time also has its divine right. Scientific thought was not brushed aside as "naturalistic," pagan, "unchristian." One was not being redeemed by scientific thought; no, scientific thought itself was being redeemed. That is the difference. Christ entered into the thinking, not only into the feeling and willing of man.

The great stars which once shone forth in the Mysteries, but in a different form, appeared again—not as dogmas, nor yet as articles of faith, but as divine realities, uniting with other truths in one great spirit-harmony, and they shone down upon a world made new.

When will Christian theologians in great number realise that here alone is the salvation of Christianity to be found, that if it is ignored Christianity will either go forward to its ruin as the result of clouded thinking or relapse into orthodoxy, and from thence into Catholicism as the result of half thinking.

Even to-day I do not say: accept—but: take it seriously. Test it without prejudice and test it thoroughly.—And then the battle is won.

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If I were asked to-day: Why are you an Anthroposophist?—T would answer: Not because I have been able through my own investigations to test everything Rudolf Steiner has said—of that there can be no question—but because in the little that I have been able to test I have found more and more astounding confirmation. Not because I have been able to accept the results of spiritual-scientific research en bloc and in complete faith, but because they shed convincing light in many domains where there was no other light to be found. Not because a new kind of pope was issuing dogmas, but because one in the advance guard of humanity saw realities, which turned out to be genuine even if one merely accepted and lived with them as possibilities. Not because I had known no other spiritually significant men in my fife, but because I simply saw how Rudolf Steiner excelled them all. Not because I thought that apart from Rudolf Steiner nobody else in the world had anything that was worth doing or saying, but because I recognised that at a critical point the ramparts of the spirit were broken through and, as a result of this, great and mighty tasks set before mankind for a long time to come. Not because I had previously dreamed or always conceived that in actual life a leader of humanity who points to the future would be exactly as Rudolf Steiner was, but because I saw more and more clearly, that he was one of these leaders of mankind, and because such leaders must be accepted as they come to us, and because it became more and more apparent that Rudolf Steiner’s genius was equal to his world-

historic mission. Not because all difficulties in regard to the results of his research are for me now at an end, but because many are already at an end, and because one must be able to take things as they are, not as one might wish them to be, and let them rest until one understands them. Above all: because here is a picture of the world with which Christianity can live and go forward into the future and because without such a picture of the world Christianity cannot in the higher sense go on leading an honest existence on the earth. Not because I do not know or cannot sympathise with the shocks which

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 113 Anthroposophy may have in store for those who have come from the cradle of older Christianity, but because I consider such shocks to be without sufficient foundation, and at bottom, unintelligent. To me, Anthroposophy is an achievement, which finally leads the way out of materialism, a work of spiritual redemption which, springing from Middle Europe, will lay hold of all mankind, a salvation of Christendom born of the purified scientific spirit of the times, a living word of Christ to the present age—the word that was needed if humanity were not to go forward to its ruin.

Look where I will—I find nothing so great, so conclusive. Especially in theology, even in the newest, I see no salvation. Why hesitate, then, when the help is there, just because its appearance is not what one expected?

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Another deep test was in store for me at that time. At the end of 1919 I fell ill. All strenuous mental work was out of the question, and took its revenge in the customary digestive disturbances. What was the trouble? Had my strenuous efforts for occult development led to harmful results after all? What was Dr. Steiner saying? Others wrote to him about me, though I myself did not. There was no reply. I had told numbers of people how reliable his diagnoses were and how unerring was his help. Those around me in Berlin were saying: What about your Dr. Steiner now? Does he not know. Is he not able to do anything? See how he is treating you now!

Not for six months did it turn out that Dr. Steiner had given instructions for a letter to be sent, but that it had been overlooked.

Finally, the ninth doctor, a world-famous nerve specialist, hit upon the right diagnosis: after-effects of a fall, affecting the delicate membranes of the brain. He prescribed a treatment which would bring about a slow improvement. After I had been lying ill for six months, and for a special reason, I approached Dr. Steiner once again, through an acquaintance. This time a detailed letter came from him. Diagnosis: After 8

effects of a fall, affecting the delicate membranes of the brain, added to a life of soul which had passed through much in the last few years. Therapy: The same as that prescribed by the specialist only more rhythmical and more delicately adjusted to the particular organism. Rudolf Steiner had not seen me during this whole period. Even in the unlikely event of his having heard about the specialist's diagnosis and treatment, his own indications were in any case so much more precise and fundamental that there could be no question of a mere repeating. I have more than once experienced similar cases of correct diagnosis and treatment which were given by Dr. Steiner from far away. But on this subject the doctors working with him can be heard. I once asked one of these doctors who had worked with him for a period of twelve years, to tell me quite frankly and in confidence, how often Dr. Steiner had been mistaken. He thought a little and then replied: "I do not remember a single case." —Experiences like this which crowded in upon one in the vicinity of Rudolf Steiner, could not but increase one's faith in his higher faculties.

In his letter, Dr. Steiner wrote that the illness would require at the very least six more months of complete rest. ... It lasted nine months but, as a matter of fact, I wanted to finish the book on his life-work which I had already begun.

It was not until Midsummer, 1921, nearly two years later that I saw Dr. Steiner again in Dornach. Trivial details of this visit shall also be told because they belong to the whole picture. Dr. Steiner had sent a motor to the station and, as I had apparently missed the connection, a second one to meet the later train. He went with me to my lodging and saw to everything —whether the water supply was working, and whether there was a woman to clean the boots. In the evening, after his lecture, he came up and said to me: "After all, I have forgotten to see about a charwoman for you. But I will

do it now. She will be there early tomorrow morning." Two days later, when I was leaving again, I was surprised to see him coming up the Dornach

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 115 hill to meet me. He noticed that I was carrying our handtrunks. “Oh! I forgot to send someone to carry your luggage.” He looked around and beckoned to a young Anthroposophist, waving my protest aside: “He is very glad to do it.” Then he went with us into the canteen and sat down with us to breakfast, ordering the food himself from the serving table, and then once again when he realised that we needed provisions for the journey. After that he walked down the hill right to the station, chatting in the most friendly and interested way about various men, but also about protuberances on the sun. At the station he stood by the booking-office window—I can still see that delicately built man standing there next a corpulent monk— and stayed, still talking, until the train left. He was evidently anxious that as a poor German victim of inflationsickness, I should have no expenses, but he did not make it in the least obvious. I said to myself at the time: This is really nothing to do with you as an individual. He would like to do the same to everyone. But that is impossible, and so he takes an opportunity like this to show what he would like to do for everyone. There are some who will think such details quite unimportant. But be that as it may: it is up to somebody to tell what Rudolf Steiner was like as a man in everyday life.

Our conversations at that time varied from the telling of harmless jokes— and Dr. Steiner had all the unrestrained delight of youth in humour—to the most earnest discussions about the future of mankind.

Six months later I saw him in quite a different setting. A Berlin agency had undertaken to arrange a big lecturing tour for him. At that time Rudolf Steiner could have been the man of the day—if he had so wished. But things turned out differently. I was present at the gathering in the Berlin Philharmonic Hall—the large auditorium filled to the last seat. Outside people were snatching tickets away from each other and were paying anything up to a hundred marks for them. The hall was full of tense expectation. Unconsciously the people were waiting for the prophet of the

ii6 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE age. Rudolf Steiner appeared and spoke for more than an hour to the breathlessly listening mass of three thousand, relentlessly and fundamentally, of Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition. Again and again I asked myself : Has ever a man let an opportunity for impressing a crowd so absolutely slip by? An officer of higher rank, a respected member of the Wagner circle, was sitting by me in the box. I myself had interested him in Dr. Steiner. He sat there attentively and sympathetically, trying hard to understand. Gradually he lost hope and leant back. Then he shook his head irritably and had disappeared long before the end of the lecture.

Did Rudolf Steiner know what he was doing—that he was boring this unusual gathering of people who were waiting, open-mouthed, for sensationalism? Nobody who knew Rudolf Steiner could doubt that he was fully conscious of what he was doing. Embarrassment before the huge crowd? Inability to speak to the masses? None of this could occur for an instant to those who knew how Rudolf Steiner's speaking could make one tremble with its thunder. For whom was he really speaking? During the lecture I reckoned out how many of the audience were able and willing in some measure to follow it. Apart from Anthroposophites, I estimated five to ten. He was speaking to them, quite consciously. Everything that might have made him the sensation of the hour was pitilessly suppressed. Not the faintest breath of a will-to-impress flickered over the assembly. He hoped to awaken interest in spiritual things in those ten or possibly twenty individuals by the essential earnestness and detailed thoroughness with which he spoke of regions utterly foreign to the majority of men.

I had once heard Johannes Müller sav that one must not only be able to "talk a hall full" but also to "talk it empty" again. On that particular occasion Rudolf Steiner did this to perfection. Shortly afterwards, when he was again asked to go on a lecturing tour through Germany, the halls were half empty, and the meeting in Munich, where he was threatened with bodily injury and his life endangered as the

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 117 result of the action of a band of hooligans at the instigation of a newspaper, brought the short period when he was in vogue to a close.

Only a few really saw what was happening. There were few who recognised the greatness of a man and the epochmaking deed. I can only express it with a certain reserve, by using biblical language: One whom the people desired to crown king, left them in supreme contempt and withdrew to a mountain, waiting for whosoever should follow him there. He was the "effect-monger," the man who "lusted for power."

Similar situations, only not of this importance, have come to my knowledge many times. It really took some doing for outsiders not to let themselves be deceived by appearances. But then, even clever and apparently open-minded men were outwitted.

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In the year 1921, a number of young men went to Dr. Steiner and asked what advice he could give for religious work, not in the sense of the Churches hitherto in existence, but of a new spiritual teaching. At their Universities they had not found what they were seeking and now came, with confidence and hope, to Anthroposophy. After brief deliberation Dr. Steiner entered willingly and actively into their wishes. He had always emphasised that the Anthroposophical Society is not a Church, and could have no desire to found a new Church. Anthroposophy leaves everyone perfect freedom to cultivate his religious life in his own way. And so the impulse to activity in the religious sphere and the responsibility for instituting something new, must rest elsewhere. But then, he could help. He could not ignore a request made to him on grounds like these. And he forthwith proceeded to give most effective help, and enabled good-will to become deed.

Practically from the very beginning these young men had been in touch with me, and we had had intercourse together. I knew most of them personally. But now I was faced with a serious question: Shall I throw in my lot with them?—

On the one hand I had my big work in Berlin with twenty-five years of preparation behind it. This work was in its prime, and could have satisfied me to the last day of my life. For it was carried on under the freest conditions that could possibly be desired. On the other hand, I saw that with

the methods of the old Churches only a very few could succeed in producing any effect, that new times were coming and demanding an entirely new form of religious activity, that the need of the age was calling out for help with increasing urgency. Where was I to hope for help, if not from Anthroposophy?—"Your task is religion"—these words of Dr. Steiner agreed with my own feeling. I admit that it would not have been easy for me to absent myself from the new work which had begun under the auspices of Anthroposophy. —That was the frame of mind in which I lived during those months. On the other hand, it was clear to me that only the fullest conviction that this was right and necessary could have justified the decision such as I saw it. Nor was it possible to come to a definite conclusion until Dr. Steiner had expressed everything in his mind. It is one thing if a young man filled with enthusiasm puts his services at the disposal of an undertaking which appeals to him, and another if a man of fifty gives up everything in order to begin something new. And so I had to wait for the two courses of lectures given by Dr. Steiner on the possibilities of a religious renewal in the Summer and Autumn of 1921. For reasons of health, however, I could not myself attend them.

When the whole content of these many lectures and discussion hours lay before me, I was again astounded at Dr. Steiner. In spite of all that I had already experienced, I had not expected to find him such a king even in the realm of theology, that not only on the Bible and biblical science but also on Church History, denominational differences, the spiritual and moral depths of Christianity, he had new and magnificent teaching to give. It was teaching that pointed to the future with a hand of compelling power. What was particularly instructive and significant to me was

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 119 the concreteness, assurance and deliberation with which he tackled the question of religious practice. All this was exceedingly stimulating. But the final issue was still in the balance. The text of the Act of Consecration of Man (the Menschenweihehandlung, the rite of the new Communion Service) was sent to me. I began at once to study it from every side and to meditate upon it. When a few trivial difficulties in the language had been overcome, the purity and sublimity of the Act of Consecration of Man impressed me very strongly. It dawned upon me that here was the possibility of creating a

divine service in which all true Christians could be united, which could be regarded as the central point of a truly Christian communal life, around which a new, manifold, ever-growing religious life unfolds. Slowly it was borne in upon me: This may not be withheld from mankind! You yourself dare not fail now if you do not want to sin against humanity and the divine revelation! And if it is impossible to bring this to men in the existing forms of the Church, then something new must be ventured! Let it be expressly stated here that Dr. Steiner had been asking for a long time whether it was not possible to do something within the existing organisation of the Church and that apart from the younger ones, it was I myself who had said emphatically: It cannot be done, if the new is not to be smothered by the old!

But for me the really decisive factor came unexpectedly and from a different quarter. It was the realisation that in the Hallowed Bread, the living Christ actually comes to men. His Presence was there in indescribable purity and brilliance. It was an impression from the spirit itself—one which came, not in the Protestant service of Holy Communion, often as I had celebrated that with a tangible experience of the nearness of the divine world, but in meditation on the Act of Consecration of Man. It was an impression so strong and sure that a whole life could have been founded upon it. I will try to describe what it seemed to say: Now it is good-bye to your work in the Protestant Church! If what you have found here is truth, it must

stand in quite a different sense at the central point of religious life, of thought and of the promulgation of religion than is possible in the Protestant Church as that Church has now become! For if the new impulse is true, it contains the seeds of a new divine worship, a new communion, a new Christ impulse, a new Gospel of Christ. Hitherto I have not spoken of this to anyone, not even to my closest friends in the priesthood. For after all, the point is not what I myself have experienced, but what is actually there, and can be recognised more or less clearly by each and all in their own way. From that moment onwards it was clear to me that I must give myself to the service of the reality which had been revealed to me, without the hindrance of other ties. So I came to the new Christian Community from the very

innermost core of things. And I am glad that I can say this. The final word was spoken, not by Dr. Steiner but by One higher than he.

I did not even tell Dr. Steiner any of this. One did not often speak to him of such experiences—at least I did not— and then only briefly and in a matter-of-fact way. And if one had got beyond the first stages, it was no longer necessary.

On the other hand I must mention another conversation. It consisted of just two sentences, but it contained an infinitude. It had dawned on me in meditation that Christ can actually be received into the very body and blood, without the Bread and the Wine. A personal characteristic which for decades had caused me great difficulties, namely, that impressions from the spirit and soul invariably worked very strongly on the body, was now explained in a most wonderful way, giving one an inkling of how the destinies of men are guided. This was the preparation which enabled me to realise so vividly that if His Presence is real, Christ works down into body and blood, giving man out of Himself a new body and new blood and to know and experience this is the actual, essential conquest of the materialism of the age! In this conversation with Rudolf Steiner I asked: “Is it not possible to receive the Body and Blood of Christ without the

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 121 Bread and the Wine, purely in meditation? He answered: "It is possible. From the back of the tongue onwards it is exactly the same.” I admit that the incredibly concrete reality expressed in these words still came as somewhat of a shock to me. But it was often so in conversations with Rudolf Steiner. He at once gave something higher to those who spoke to him, something from which they had then to learn for a long time. But to-day I know that he was right, and that Christ is the “Bread of Life” in a much more real and powerful sense than the vast majority of Christians even dimly surmise.

This was now the question before me: Very well, it is possible to enter so directly into Christ; but how many human beings will be capable of it? Is it not essential for the far greater majority to have a form of worship in which they come to this experience in their own way and are thus led to the Reality of Christ ?

It is at this point that the relation between the Anthroposophical Movement and the Christian Community becomes clear. If a ritual had been given for the Anthroposophical Society it could have been based to a far greater extent on the details of the new conception of the world brought forward by Anthroposophy. But this new conception of the world has yet to fight its way through in every domain, and has heavy enough difficulties in front of it. Humanity as a whole cannot wait for this. Moreover, there are men in abundance who have no immediate interest in the struggle in which a new conception of the world is involved. For all such men there can be a form of worship which is in full accord with the spiritual knowledge existing in Anthroposophy and which indeed without Anthroposophy could not be there, but which does not teach or presuppose this knowledge and which, as a direct channel, gives men what will unite them with the highest reality.

What the Christian Community has to impart to man is of the Highest : the living Christ, in His full Reality and Power. There is nothing more sublime. But it is there at a definite time and for a definite need in humanity.

If the Christian Community were composed only of Anthroposophists Dr. Steiner would have regarded its mission as having failed. The Anthroposophical Society has its own great tasks as a movement in civilisation—a movement which is all essential in this age of intellectualistic materialism, and it has to fight strenuously enough to make its way. For these, and also for financial reasons, it simply could not carry the weight of a new community. But apart from this, Dr. Steiner also wished to educate men who will in future increase in number. Such men seek for spiritual communion, and through what Dr. Steiner has given can come in their way to the same sublime goal as is brought, in its way, by the Christian Community. For the goal of the Anthroposophical Movement, too, is communion with Christ in body and blood. This communion can be experienced, although it may remain unconscious, in meditation and in ritual alike.

When Dr. Steiner was asked: What is the difference between the Anthroposophical Movement and the Christian Community?—he answered: "The Anthroposophical Movement addresses itself to man’s need for knowledge and brings knowledge; the Christian Community addresses

itself to man’s need for resurrection and brings Christ.’’ We have already shown the sense in which knowledge, too, in itself can lead to Christ.

He who lives within the Christian Community may feel himself during the ritual in the immediate presence of Christ. He has nourishment for his soul and help for his life—help as strong and powerful as he could possibly wish. He need not trouble himself about the details of anthroposophical knowledge, but he shares in the highest goal to which anthroposophical knowledge can aspire. If the demand for the knowledge is there, we who lead the Christian Community, and who have received such wealth from Anthroposophy, can give him, out of Anthroposophy, the help he needs. For our aim is to keep pace with the conception of the world that is coming into being, and not to remain with the one that is passing away. But in all these

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 123 things the individual is left the fullest freedom—priest and member of the community alike. No anthroposophical teaching is a dogma of the Christian Community. What welds the Christian Community are the great basic truths of Christianity, viewed, of course, in the light of a new spiritual teaching—and the history of modern times shows that they would be lost without this—but given in such a form that they express what leads to the actual salvation of man. The Anthroposophical Society is a movement in civilisation which embraces all domains of culture. The Christian Community is a Church of Salvation which can embrace all people.

If all these things are clearly perceived and openly stated, and all-too-human feelings do not crop up here and there, everyone can know for himself where he belongs. What helps him most to become a helper of humanity and a fellow-labourer with Christ—that is the right thing for him.

This was the sense in which Rudolf Steiner became an "adviser and helper" in the founding of the Christian Community. Apart from Anthroposophy itself, his life’s creation was the Anthroposophical Society. But it was right for a community to arise which helps all human beings to become Christians in the true sense, and according to the needs of our modern age. The aim of Anthroposophy is to be an instrument whereby in purity and sublimity of spirit, Christ can be brought to all men in this our age. Nevertheless, Anthroposophy, with its wealth of new knowledge, did not

desire to be the substance of this community of men, but rather to wait and see if it were asked for— although, indeed, it is at the service, too, of those who do not ask.

Now that the true and healthy relationship between nature and spirit was recognised, one could gain access once again to sacrament and sacred action wherein alone a true community of Christians can unite and educate themselves upwards and on. Likewise one could find the way once more to proclaim the Christ with real power, revealing Him

 in His living action upon man and earth. Such a gospel alone is capable of taking its stand in a materialistic time.

All this, however, now stands there for itself, and speaks for itself, and if it be related here it is not only because many people are asking for clear information, but also because Rudolf Steiner as a human being is revealed in all these things.

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There now followed my resignation from active service in the Ministry. In common with the far greater majority of my friends I have not left the Church itself. Nor do we induce anyone to do so. We leave it to the Churches to repudiate and excommunicate us.—Nothing more natural and matter-of-fact than my talks with Rudolf Steiner on the subject of this step in my life can be imagined. He never attempted to exercise the slightest influence. In the preparatory stage I told him that I still felt elastic enough to leave the position I had held hitherto; it depended on how I was going to be convinced by what he would say in his lectures. To this he answered that if I decided to come in, the leadership of the new movement would probably fall to me. I replied that from the point of view of bodily strength just then, I did not feel equal to the task. Later on he said again, entirely on his own account: “If you leave your position some fund must be there at the back of you.” That was all that was ever said between us about the change from the old to the new. I do not know if he ever found out that no such fund existed. Sentimentality and self-convenience played no part in this atmosphere of purity.

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The history of the founding of the Christian Community alone would fill a whole volume. The common experience of the original body of priests belongs to the holy-of-holies in a temple, not to the market-places of publicity. What can be told may some day be presented in its own setting. But the pictures that can be given here would not be complete without mention of two things. Rudolf Steiner

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 125 stood there among us, answering our questions just as if he were a whole university in himself, but a university of quite a new order. And he moved among us as an emissary endowed with full powers who brings in its purity the gift of one higher than he. Nobody who was present could doubt but that we were in a holy place. To look at Dr. Steiner would have told him this, if not the voice of his own conscience.

During these last two years, conversations with Dr. Steiner were less frequent. The amount of his time one was justified in claiming was needed for the most pressing affairs in connection with the Christian Community. One also saw the Atlas-like burden that lay upon his shoulders day in and day out. If he came to Stuttgart where the Christian Community had opened its centre, the Waldorf School, the Kommende Tag,* the Clinic, the Institute for Scientific Research, the Publishing Company, the editorial boards of the magazines, the Youth Movement, the Anthro-posophical Society—all stood begging at his doors, wanting to live on his advice. His was the master-mind in them all. When human shortcomings miscarried, he had always to put things right. What is the most pressing among all these pressing needs? —that was the one and only question. I remember an occasion when I would have liked to ask a personal question. But I looked into his eyes and saw pupils seered and burning as the result of many sleepless nights, and the words died on my lips. And moreover, I felt: We older men have really received a superabundance of personal riches; such time as he still has to bestow now belongs to the young, who ought to know him as we know him. And so a remark he made once was enough—that the relation between us was always the old one, although outer conditions did not permit of the same human intercourse as in earlier days.

But as a compensation for this I learnt to know him from

•The Kommende Tag was a great commercial undertaking, with a Joint Stock Company as its centre, which aimed at putting into practice the ideas of the Threefold Commonwealth.

126 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE another, new side—as a leader of and a partaker in all the meetings which I now attended as a new member of the Committee of the Anthroposophical Society.

They were extraordinarily interesting meetings. Dr. Steiner often sat as if he were taking no active part in them, supporting a weary head on his hand, and appearing to be dozing. He allowed the others to talk, and in his presence they spoke cautiously to begin with, and then with more and more animation. They were highly gifted men from the most varied domains of life. Dr. Steiner would sit there listening inscrutably, then, quite suddenly, begin to speak— whereupon the other speeches stood out in all their poverty. The superior power was so overwhelming that, spiritually, it was like a drama of the gods, personally, however, often a catastrophe. Every egotistic feeling in these splendid men passed through a crisis. In the many meetings which I had attended over some tens of years, I never saw anything to equal this example of the supremacy of one individual over others. Dr. Steiner spoke—and the many minds in the meeting were one; at all events the resistance did not count. Everyone was staring at—what he had not seen.

It was seldom possible for Dr. Steiner to praise. Although this, too, fell to my lot, I prefer to speak of the time when I encountered his displeasure, for this also is part of the story of a life's association. There is scarcely one among his nearest co-workers who had not at some time to undergo his strong criticism. For he expected a great deal, especially in the matter of ruthless objectivity and selflessness. If, in face of the colossal difficulty of the world-task, he were to get the most out of men who were all inadequate, he could not smooth over with kindnesses, defects and errors which he saw.

At that time—it was about a year after the founding of the Christian Community—I had written an article in defence of Dr. Steiner. It was too

merciful with his opponents, and went much too far to meet them. True he said at the meeting again and again—no less than five times—that he

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 127 did not blame me. But I could not help taking deeply to heart the way in which he reproached the editors and the Committee as a whole for having allowed the article to appear. As a matter of fact I was unaware of various conversations in which he had expressed his wishes in this direction. Not everything was humanly intelligible to me in these discussions, nor was it on some other occasions. But even in such delicate and difficult moments as these, nothing was ever said or done which modified the supreme opinion I held of Rudolf Steiner's qualities as a man.

I soon realised that I had not correctly estimated the effect of such articles. Perhaps not consciously, but certainly unconsciously, their influence is apt to be not what one desires, not only among non-anthroposophists but also, as Dr. Steiner once emphasised to me, among anthroposophists themselves.

One thing, above all, was clear to me, although not fully so until after Dr. Steiner's death. The fact that anthroposophists did not protect him as they should have done obviously caused him far greater suffering than we knew. Opponents covered him with derision and scorn, and anthroposophists let it pass all too easily, and went on enjoying his lectures. He was not concerned on account of himself as a person but on account of the effect which the disgraceful attacks would have on his work. He was fully aware that his opponents were dragging his personality in the mud in order to destroy his work. And he saw that anthroposophists did not see this. They retreated into their citadel and did not see that fire was being laid around its walls. I myself on one occasion said as much in the presence of Dr. Steiner, and he most heartily agreed. But in those years he could not say exactly what he felt about it; he had to wait for what should come from the insight and freedom of others if he was not to be forced into making a pathetic plea that after all surely someone might come forward in his defence! During those days he was "like one great open wound," as someone said to me later on. And from there one may turn to the translucent calm and kindly spirit in

128 RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE which he wrote The Story of My Life. Perhaps that book, too, will help finally to place Dr. Steiner before

the public in the right light !

The very last months of his life held in store three delightful talks with him. It was he himself who suggested them. When I went to Dornach in May, 1924, he came up to me after a lecture. He seemed like the spirit of kindness incarnate. When I want to realise what real kindness is, I think of the picture of how he stood there before me, radiant with kindness and the light of the spirit. As we talked I saw, to my surprise, that he was obviously glad to speak of certain matters in the Anthroposophical Society which were sorely troubling him. He seemed almost overwhelmed by the shortcomings of his followers. But then he entered into my personal affairs just as if nothing else in the world mattered. As I was not feeling physically well, he wanted me to speak in detail of what I had been going through. When I felt unwilling to do so even under pressure, because it seemed too unimportant at that moment, he understood everything from the slightest indications.

Only after his death did it dawn upon me that the last personal talk with him was actually a " Farewell" in a deeper sense than was consciously realised at the time. He said a few words about me which seemed to express what he thought about our life's relation. They are too sacred for me to be able to tell them. I thanked him once again for having helped me from a distance with such effective advice in regard to my illness. He turned it off with an expression of infinite kindness: "No, dear Herr Doctor, I thank you for having given me the opportunity to help." Those were the last words he spoke to me on earth. No more significant or beautiful ending of my life's relation with him can possibly be imagined. It was like a colloquy with humanity itself as whose representative I might have been taken at that moment. Is humanity going to give him "opportunity to help" to a vast extent?

The dimensions which this life and activity now assumed simply took one's breath away. There were the two-and-

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 129 a-half weeks during which, in spite of abdominal trouble lasting for months, he gave about seventy lectures:—one lecture every day to doctors and theologians, one to actors and artists, one to theologians alone, one to the assembled members of the

Anthroposophical Society, and every second day a lecture to the workmen at the Goetheanum. All these lectures were given to people who were experts in their own line, and an unparalleled wealth of new teaching was given in all domains. It was as if one only needed to probe Dr. Steiner at some other point and a flood of superhuman knowledge poured over the listeners. But after all, the shorthand reports of the lectures are available, and a future age will be able to judge of what was happening at that time. Every day at the Goetheanum was so full that it needed a whole period of study to itself. Again and again I asked myself: Where, in all the history of the world, has there been anything like this? Is it blind enthusiasm that makes one see it, or is it not far rather blind stupidity not to see it? Rudolf Steiner, who was often very weak when he arrived, obviously felt well while he was giving the lectures, and grew more and more refreshed as they went on. But the additional fact of having to get through two hundred interviews with people who came to him with requests, was more than his strength could bear.—(The doorkeeper counted the number of visits. Dr. Steiner himself never did so and never spoke of it.) And yet people went on using him relentlessly—I could give examples of it—for their own personal affairs.

Years before, in connection with my own much humbler work in the cure of souls, Dr. Steiner had once said to my wife: “He must cut out all these visits. What people say to him gets all stored up inside him and that makes him ill.” Those who can guess how much inner sacrifice is required for really spiritual discernment and counsel— sacrifice that far transcends what is so commonly called “love”—will be able to gauge what was happening in those days. During his last illness Rudolf Steiner himself said that the finishing stroke had been the number of per-

 sonal interviews, not the lectures. Certainly, once before, when a member of the Executive had asked anthroposophists to show their love for him by not making so many personal claims on him, Dr. Steiner had said: “The only love people can show me is to call me day and night when they need me.” But the last words were not taken with a deep enough sense of responsibility. And so in the language of religion one can say: Dr. Steiner died at the hand of human

“sins.” Those outside and those inside worked together. His freely given help led him to death.

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Six months later I was standing beside his coffin. None of us had expected that Rudolf Steiner would succumb to the illness. The mortal sheath, just abandoned by the spirit setting out on its far journey, was resting on the death-bed at the foot of the Christ statue which stood there almost completed. Those who looked at the face of the dead could see what the spirit can make of the body in the life of a truly great man on earth. The sublimity and purity of his features was equal to every test, and unsurpassed. Perhaps the death mask, if it is ever reproduced as a picture, will be a means of convincing many. Again and again one’s gaze turned from the forsaken earthly body to the great Christ figure which points with compelling gesture into the future. The disciple had fallen at the feet of the Master. It was as if Christ were taking the disciple to Himself with sheltering arms while He Himself went forward with unceasing step towards the future of the world. The disciple’s mission was fulfilled. The Master’s brow was radiant with the fight of divine world-purposes.

When, at the wish of Frau Dr. Steiner, and in the solemnly decorated hall where Dr. Steiner had given most of his great lectures, I was performing the burial service according to the ritual of the Christian Community, a drop of the sprinkled water fell in the centre of the forehead and shone there through the whole service like a sparkling diamond. The light of many candles was reflected in this

RUDOLF STEINER ENTERS MY LIFE 131 glittering star—even as the revelations of light from higher worlds had been reflected in his spirit. Thus adorned, the body sank into the coffin.—To me it was as if higher Spirits had indicated in an earthly picture what it had been our lot to experience.

When the service was at an end, one impression lived mightily within my soul: “This work is now completed. Like a great question it stands there before mankind. If all who belong to that work dedicate their powers to it with single purpose, it will prevail!”

The End

NOTE BY TRANSLATOR

For those readers who are not familiar with the history of the Theosophical Society and Rudolf Steiner's earlier connection with it, it is well to add a brief note in explanation of certain passages in this book. Rudolf Steiner was for some years at the beginning of the century, General Secretary to the German Section of the Theosophical Society, always, however, working on entirely free and independent lines. From the very beginning, his teachings —especially on the subject of Christianity—differed fundamentally from those of Annie Besant and other acknowledged leaders in the Theosophical Society. If it is said that the Anthroposophical Movement began within the framework of the Theosophical Society, it must also be remembered that it always represented an absolutely independent stream of thought, and that ultimate separation was inevitable. Rudolf Steiner could not countenance the teaching given in the Theosophical Society from the year 1910 onwards concerning the incarnation of the Christ in the body of a Hindu boy, and in 1912 the Charter of the German Section was cancelled by Mrs. Besant. The Anthroposophical Society was then founded as a separate body receiving a new constitution and form at Christmas 1923.

D.S.O.

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